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Dance and Dancers

NOVEMBER 1961

This month's full ballet guide

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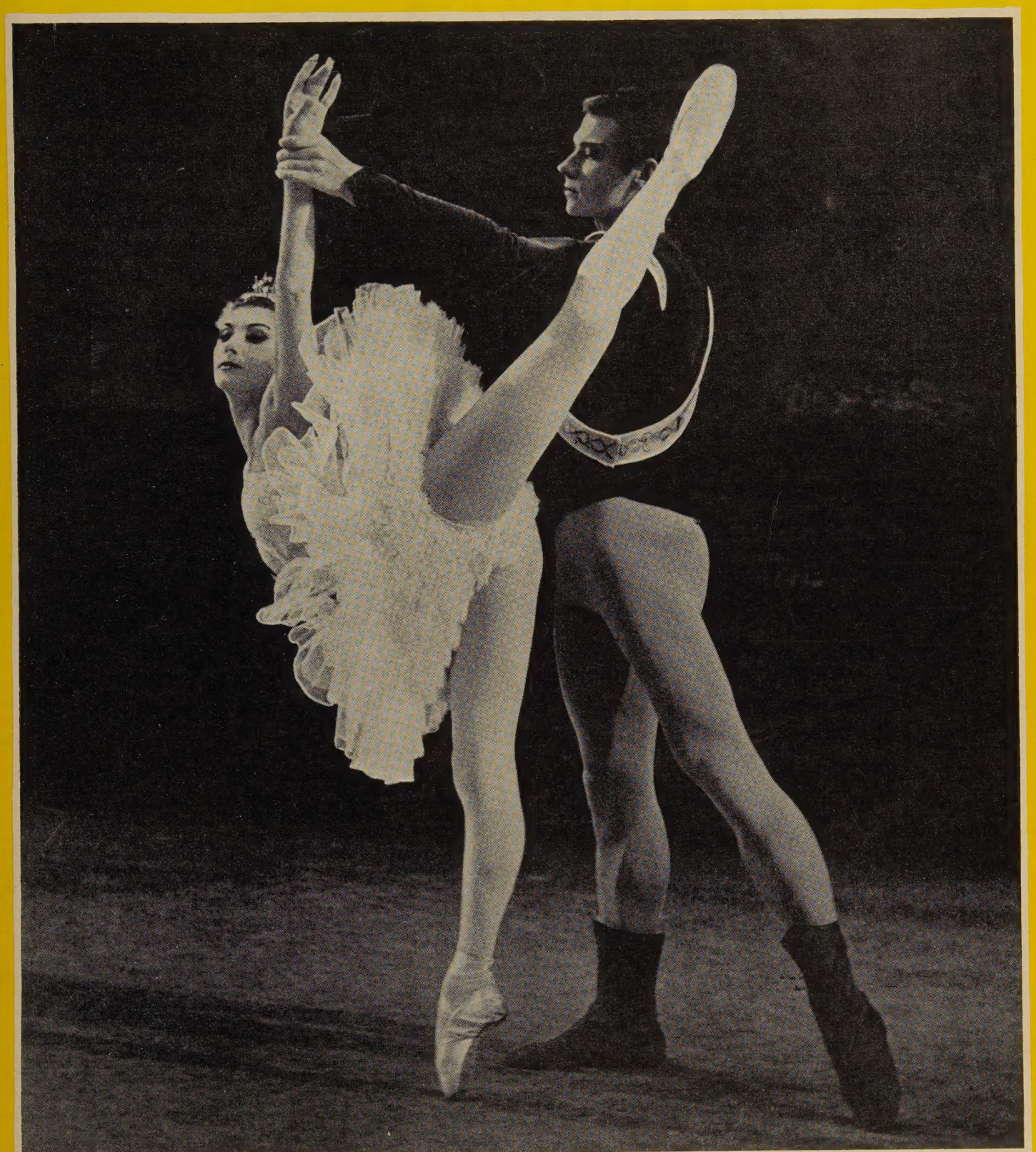

MARILYN BURR and DAVID ADAMS

of London's Festival Ballet in the Bourmeister *Swan Lake* (Photo : Anthony Crickmay)

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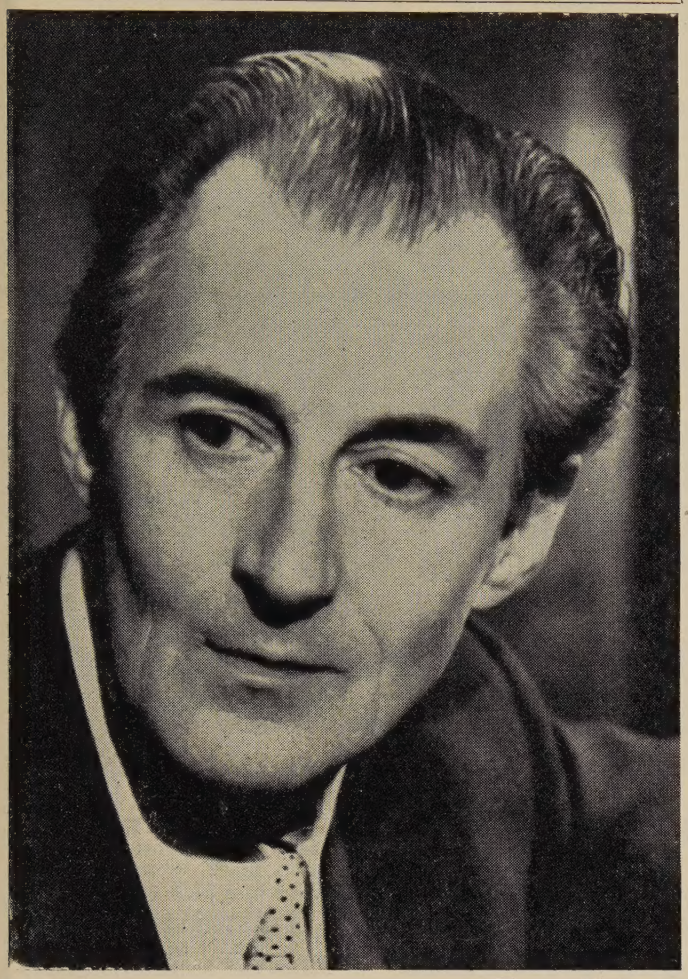

Photo : Vivienne.

ANTON DOLIN

ANTON DOLIN can be and has been called many things in the course of his long and distinguished career in British ballet. The one adjective or label no one has ever been able to pin on to him is "predictable". And even here he does not always run true to form, for his *Bolero 1932* has become as predictable in his concert appearances as his famous partner Markova's *Bolero 1830,* and of course nowadays they both appear in *The Dying Swan !*

Almost every virtue and vice that it is possible for an artist to possess Dolin has either had it, got it or is about to obtain it any moment now. The first great British male dancer since Simon Slingsby at the end of the 18th century, Dolin has done a fantastic amount of good for male dancing in this country. He was in his heyday as great a dancer as any you are likely to see. A magnificent partner, an excellent technician and a supreme stylist. His acting was of its period, for he came to prominence before the conception of a dancer's involvement with the rôle found its current favour, and by our own under-stated standards, his acting would appear over-melodramatic. Yet as a personality he has and always will breathe theatre. One may not like everything he has done — some of his curtain speeches, for example, can make the hair curl — but Dolin is never a person to be ignored, which is more than can be said of many dancers.

What Dolin has done by way of setting an example to our younger male dancers, of first nailing the lie that British boys could not dance — all this must be incalculable. But the number of dancers, both male and female, he has helped and encouraged all over the world can be listed. It makes one of the most formidable lists of star names in ballet possible to imagine. Dolin is ballet's supreme talent scout. He can see qualities in dancers they scarcely knew they possessed. He will help them (often financially), encourage them and train them. Only one other has done as much for the current crop of dancers as Dolin, and that, appropriately enough, is his rival and friend, Serge Lifar.

NOVEMBER 1961 12th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 12 No. 11

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES
Assistant Editor: E. C. Mason.
WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

Tour de Force Tours

THIS has been a year of foreign travel for British companies — parts of the Royal Ballet's two-headed juggernaut have crossed America, played in Russia, the Far and Middle East while London's Festival Ballet has played across the mainland of Europe — all of it has been highly successful and unfortunately this very real success has never been properly brought home to the British public. But even if the British public is not aware of it, and still fondly imagine that British companies are only there for their own pleasure and convenience, foreign touring is doubtless going to be the lot of all the major companies in Great Britain from now on. We are bound to keep up with the Joneses (and by them I mean the Russians, the Americans the French, and so on) whether we like it or not and there is no other path we can take.

But not all touring is going to be in theatres with all the usual equipment and laid-on comforts ; a great deal of it, and incidentally the most valuable part of it, will be in the open air and those unusual places where most foreign festivals take place. If this is so, then are the repertories of our British companies elastic and adaptable enough to show us up to our best advantage ? The answer is, as things stand at the moment, most decidedly "No". Well, with the first chill winds of winter rattling our doors and windows it is time everybody responsible for such matters (No, *don't* pass the buck — it is the responsibility of the Directors and Artistic Directors of every company) got down to very seriously considering this matter and it's no use leaving it until next spring when it will be far too late.

Every company should have at least two different programmes which can be played without scenery (and without the ballets losing one iota because of this forced omission) and against backgrounds as varied as, say, the temples of Baalbeck, the lake of Geneva, the wild and burning plains and mountains of Andalusia — in fact anywhere. They should be programmes that are balanced with a classic, a dramatic work and a neo-classic work with, possibly, a *pas de deux* thrown in if absolutely essential.

Festivals are one of ballet's most important outlets and even if their existence is meagre in Britain (though it would even be possible to play Edinburgh if repertories could be thus adapted), foreign countries have been quick to realise their potential. So with this in mind there should be a new slant on all future planning and a stop made to this lumbering-up of repertories with almost immovable ballets. Ballet has always been nomadic and nothing will change it.

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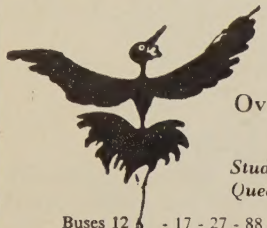

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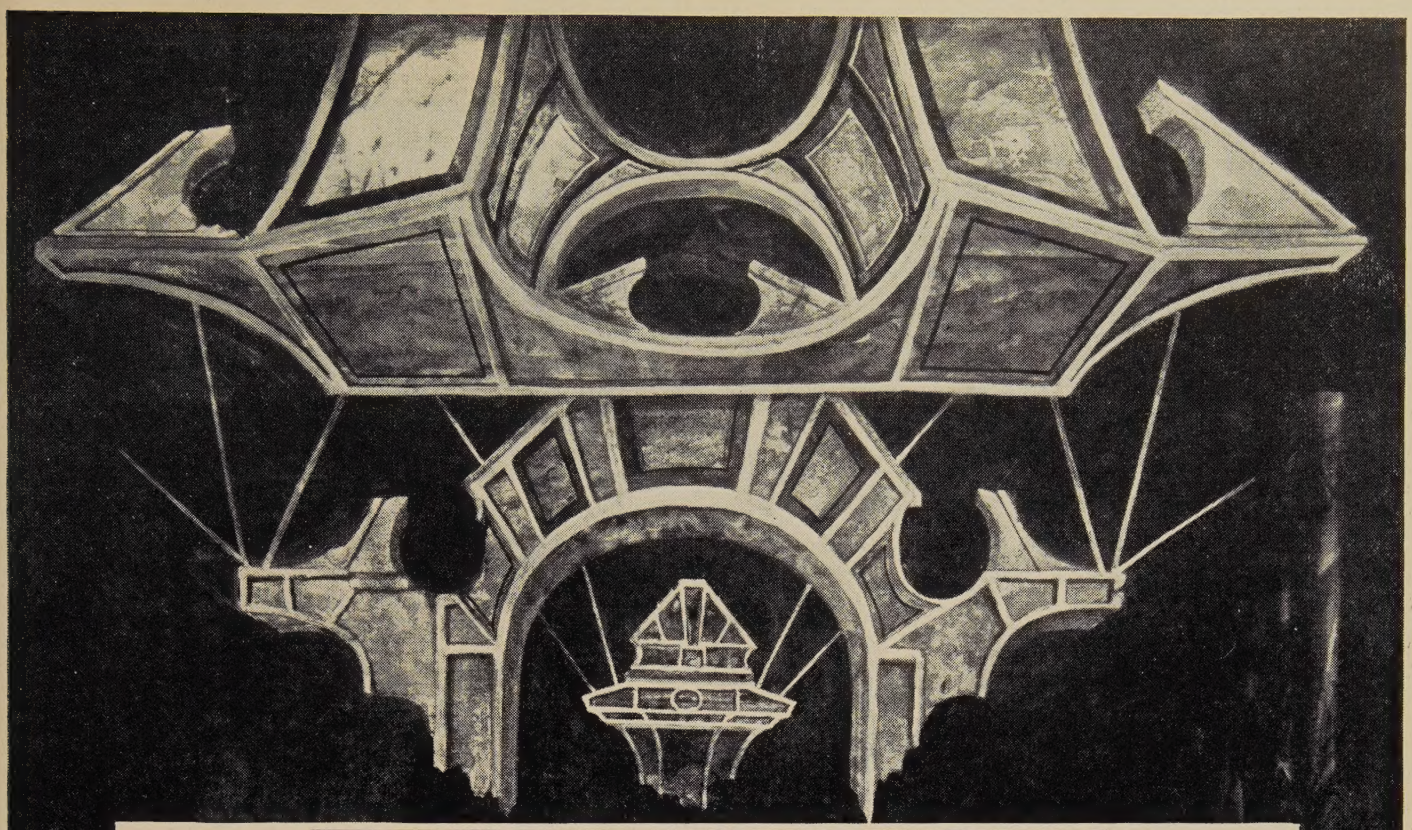

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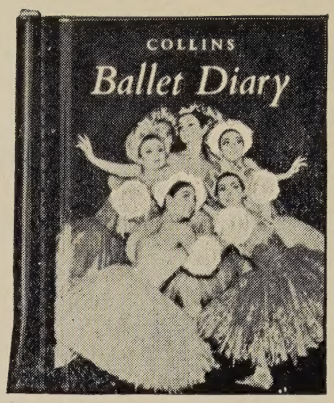

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watch their unambiguous shape. Our ears sense innumerable threads of meaning: our eyes would see these variations in terms of one form equally upheld by every passing air, by every noise, an animation in various hovering movements or in the parabolas of flight. We attribute thus a white outcome to the ferment of the street, to the dull-travelling waters."

And that, dear friends, was one of my predecessors in the ballet racket, one Adrian Stokes, taking his run up to the wicket to discuss Massine's ballet *Les Présages*. The passage for all its classy (somewhat obscurantist, perhaps?) prose, hardly comes to grips with its subject, and the subject I'm thinking of is not *Les Présages*, but the plotless ballet, or the more than less plotless ballet, generally.

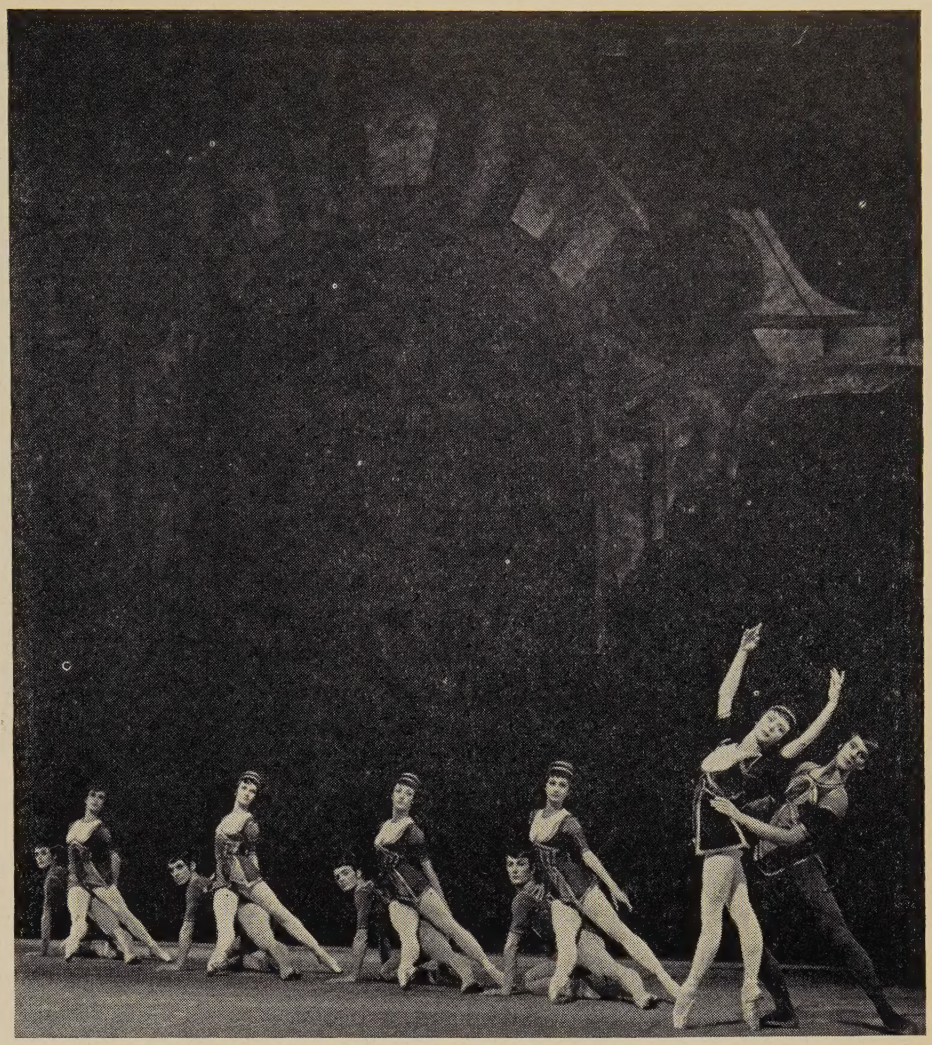
Now let's try another approach and listen to that wise old man Cyril Beaumont, on the subject of Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial*: "Then the line of cavaliers walk towards the ladies who remain in place, take their partners, and turn them round. The formation splits into two lines of girls and four couples, which cross and recross. . . . Then the row at the left up-stage corner dances along the diagonal towards the row at left up-stage corner *(sic)*, and returns. Similarly, the row at the left down-stage corner moves to right up-stage corner and returns, while the row at the right up-stage corner moves towards the left-down-stage corner and returns."

But, of course, Beaumont is indulging in one of his rare jokes, and he ironically interrupts his "account of the ballet in action, because an abstract ballet does not lend itself to description, which resolves itself into a succession of tracks, geometrical terms, and names of steps which must soon tire the reader." But is there any middle way between Stokes' idiosyncratic purple passages and Beaumont's objective geometrical progression? Some people would say the American critic Edwin Denby has found the answer, and sometimes he has.

Now consider this Denby passage on Balanchine's *Caracole*: "In this succession of fragmentary *pas de deux*, a new duet sometimes takes over with the boy changing partner merely on an up-beat, and the shift cuts into the continuity of the melody; you feel the wound of the cut, and yet you see across it the same tender intimacy continue undisturbed as if dreamlike; continue through each shifted pair and across the flowing melodic periods poignantly unbroken as long as the movement lasts; as if there were tenderness enough forever, the beautiful couples dismembered and recoupled, three boys and five girls, with no jealous failure in their lovely awareness. But as if to give no pathos to this image, the dance does not touch any of the 'moments of expression' of the music — the young people on stage seem not to by some delicacy of instinct."

This is interpretation rather than description — "tenderness enough forever" or "no jealous failure" even that phrase "the wound of the cut" — these are all geared, and rightly so, to make friends and influence people, although they are far from being subjective fantasies or ramblings. Both the strength and limitation of Denby's work arise from the same thing — his obsession with real or imagined detail. The detail is magnificent, especially as most of us writing about ballet confine ourselves to what amounts to hardly more than an infinite series of variations to the effect of "That's nice!" or "That's nasty!"

Yet the detail is also, by its nature, very small. He offers us a microscope when sometimes we cry out for a pair of binoculars.



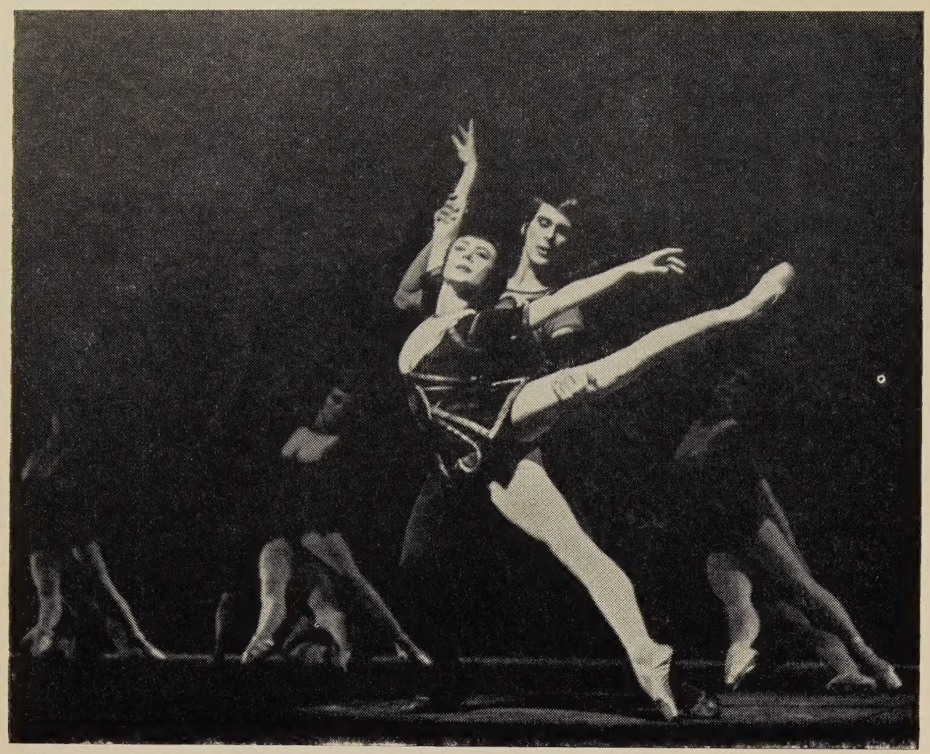
TOGETHER: The dancers, led by Beriosova and MacLeary, against Prowse's simple yet monumental setting. In this and also in the two pictures on page 12 can be seen how MacMillan uses his four principal dancers with the group of eight soloists.

"And what," I can almost hear you say, "is he going to say about MacMillan's new ballet, *Diversions?* And when? for I have a train to catch." So have we all, eventually, but bear with me a little longer. Imagine, if you will, an empty stage; the curtain is raised, the lights pick out the arena for dancing. The music starts, the dancers enter in practice dress, anonymous and business-like. They come jumping in like . . . no similes here, if you please, they are just jumping. Now he is taking her hand, one of her legs is going up into an *arabesque penché*, now he is promenading her around — why, why, why? What's happening? What are they trying to do to your mind? Ah, but you see, this is just pure dancing — it's like abstract painting or sculpture. But it isn't! Those are people up there — that's a man, and that's a woman. Are they in love or something, and why is he pushing her around like that?

In ballet every picture tells a story, the visual image feeds the literary appetite, even when we are least prepared for it. Imagine our anonymous dancers in our imaginary *pas de deux*, now Mr. Beaumont would call them out straight (and would be right as far as he went). For Mr. Stokes the scene might possibly evoke Clapham Junction in the rush hour perhaps something like "the hissing manifestoes of steam, as lines criss and cross like migratory humming birds in astonished flight". And for Mr. Denby it might be: "The young people come together with unknowing innocence, and the momentum of the image accelerates as pelvic thrust forces the dancers forward. Now the girl smiles, inwardly, without smiling, and the boy laughs, without laughing, and the Vivaldi music, all rustling satin, resolves while, just one note after, on a suprising offbeat, the boy, quieter now, catches the girl's hand."

And that, with apologies to Mr. Stokes, and particularly to Mr. Denby, is just a *pas de deux*. Now imagine a ballet, called *Diversions*, but there is no need to imagine it, for it has just been danced at Covent Garden, and for all my joking I think only Denby could do full justice to the look and feel of MacMillan's choreography. Denby might or might not like it (I hope he would), but it's Denby's sort of ballet.

Presumably *Diversions* represents the reaction often found in choreographers of turning away from their last ballet. After his very dramatic narrative work, *The Invitation*, it was probably natural for MacMillan to feel drawn to the chaste plains of pure dance, or perhaps it was merely that Dame Ninette de Valois tossed him over Bliss's *Music for Strings*, and said run up a little something to this. Choreographically, *Diversions* marks another stage in the development of a lyrical style which has been so noticeable in MacMillan's work ever since *Le Baiser de la Fée*.



The movement style here is as smooth as butter. It is all very feminine and flowing, with little or nothing of the abrupt male statement to provide contrast. In keeping with this conception, MacMillan appears to have deliberately eliminated all "vertical" steps that might have impeded the fluency. For example, *double tours en l'air* and most beaten steps, notably *entrechats,* have been ignored.

This self-imposed restriction gives the choreography a certain individuality. With its emphasis on virtuoso *pirouettes* and *jetés* the ballet takes on a quality of liquid grace. On the other hand, it also results in a marked lack of contrast, that is a potentially dangerous development of an attitude that has been present in MacMillan's work right from the beginning. He has always been very selective in his use of the classical vocabulary, particularly in his work for male dancers. I would guess that the total number of *double tours en l'air* to be found in his entire output could be counted on the fingers of both hands. In *Diversions* this discipline justifies itself, and the work has an extraordinary feeling of airy lightness and freedom about

THE DANCERS AND
Beriosova and MacLeary

it. Yet I suspect it is rather like a painting carried out in various tones of blue, which may be excellent in itself even though one would not wish to see the artist's palette permanently restricted.

At a first glance the choreography seems to be remarkably like Ashton's, but this passing similarity is more apparent than real. Certainly Ashton has never composed in such an even texture — the aqueous measures at the end of the first act of *Ondine* bear some similarity with *Diversions,* but the choreographic realisation of Tirrenio gives it a touch of variety MacMillan seems to have deliberately eschewed. Some of the floor patterns also show a possible Ashton influence which MacMillan has been at some pains, conscious or otherwise, to minimise. Thus when he has the four boys sitting posing on the stage along the diagonal, a situation that, to me at least, irresistibly recalls a famous moment in *Scènes de Ballet,* MacMillan in his determination to reject the "Michelangelo" pose adopted by Ashton, puts them in a bizarrely original pose that lacks both grace and naturalness.

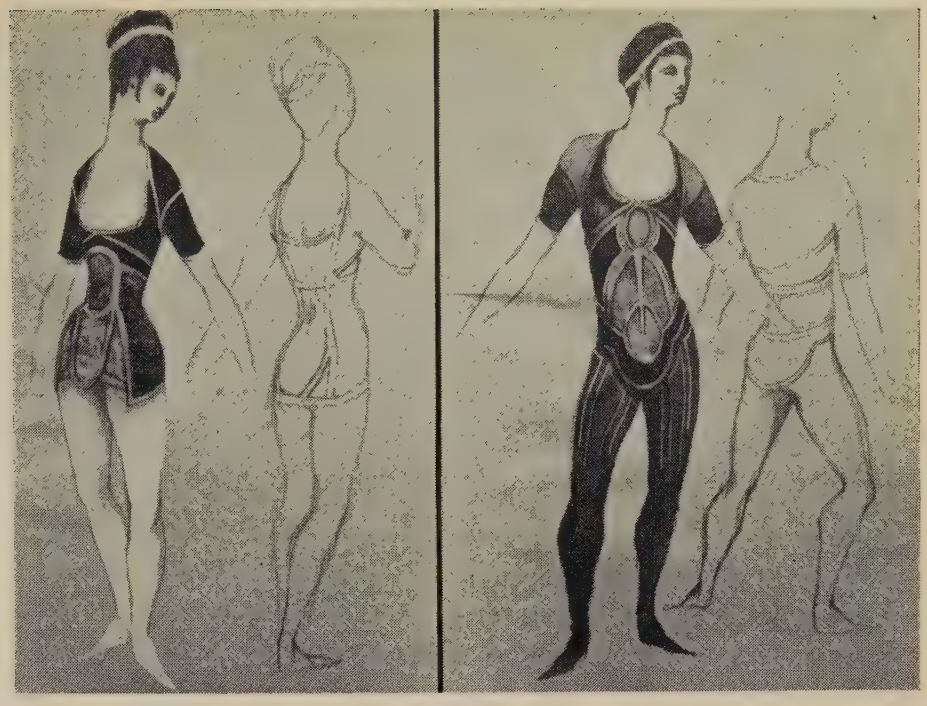
This is, of course, a small point, particularly in view of the refinement and exciting power of the choreography as a whole. It seems to spin out in one effortless and elegant thread, and indeed the only breaks in continuity, the only moments when the choreography loses its grip on inevitability, come in some of the double work. Here MacMillan, with his backwards partnering and modish *pas de deux* gimmicks, occasionally goes too far. His quest for individuality in the *pas de deux* (an understandable anxiety in a choreographer whose works normally have to stand next to Ashton's) here, as in the past, sometimes leads him to confuse novelty with creation. Equally, at its best, his double work combines lyricism with a daring ingenuity that is fascinating.

So far I have commented *on Diversions* rather than written *about,* and I have done this for the very adequate reason that it's far easier. I started off by trying to illustrate my view that it was virtually impossible to write about a plotless ballet, and I have no intention of letting my argument down now by succeeding. What can be done, I think validly, and perhaps even helpfully for the audience, is to indulge in a bit of free-association wallowing, pointing out not what the choreographer put in by way of mood, theme, etc. (not, that is, unless one makes a peculiarly lucky hit) but rather what one member of the audience got out.

Of course, one's impression of ballet is only derived in part from the choreography, and this is especially true of plotless works. For example, MacMillan has chosen (or at least permitted) his ballet to be given vaguely Etruscan costumes and a setting of suspended, broken masonry, and the costumes and architecture, coupled with the somewhat self-satisfied Elgarian melancholy of Bliss's score suggests to me a dying civilisation. An Edwardian sun setting over the Malvern hills, a Mediterranean ritual from an obsolescent religion; to my mind and imagination the whole ballet has a dying fall to it.

I always look for the dramatic in a ballet, and always looking, naturally always find. This is perhaps naïve of me, yet it is drama and humanity that attracts me to

THE DANCERS AND
Lane and Usher



THEIR PROWSE DESIGNS
L., Beriosova; R., MacLeary.

dancing, and without them I would just as soon watch it with my eyes closed. In the swiftly-moving patterns of *Diversions,* the comings and goings, the mass migrations and the solo sorties, the moments of splendour and formality, in all this I feel the tug of an underlying pattern, the undertow of a daydream. But, as Spike Milligan says, it's all in the mind, you know. Incidentally, wasn't it a pity MacMillan didn't either choose or insist on accepting a score that could give his inspiration more of a lift? For if *Diversions* is not his most inspired work (and it is not) surely it is his most mature?

DANCING

CREATIVE fallibility being what it is, the hallmark of a great company is more consistently seen in its standards of performance than its standards of ballet itself. Nowadays, and how lucky we are, even our worst ballets are often beautifully danced, which is a great consolation for critics braving the dangers of their occupational disease, housemaid's seat.

However, while we now have dancers capable of doing more than justice to a bad ballet, given a good ballet they can dance like demons, which is not quite the same as dancing like hell. *Diversions* is so well performed that I think the performance has detracted some attention from the merits of the ballet itself.

Beriosova and MacLeary, with their extended line, loose-limbed athleticism, and abstracted poetry went through the ballet with a sort of diffident grandeur. Some of the smaller steps were not ideal for Beriosova, whose style needs more space than MacMillan (or more often, although inadvertently, Bliss) gave her, but here and there the ballet allowed the opportunity to display a flashing *panache* too often hidden by her usual repertory.

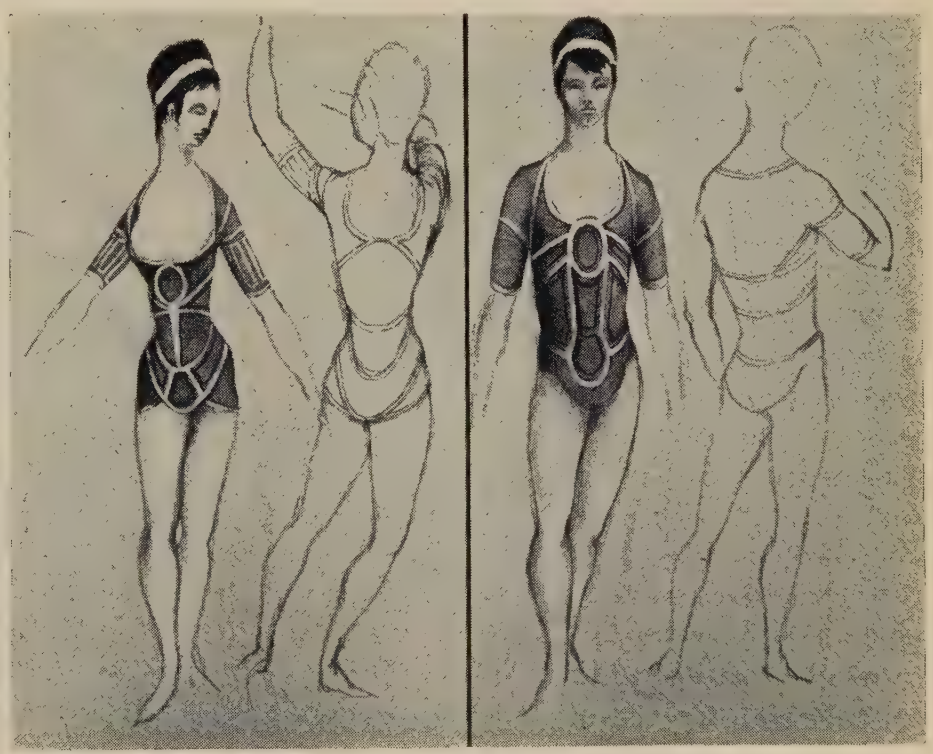
MacLeary continues to improve, and is now dancing with a much sharper accent and sense of control than he once commanded. He still needs a better jump (higher rather than longer, and this, I suspect, is more a question of timing than elevation) but he has acquired more breadth and authority in his *ports de bras,* and generally more polish.

Maryon Lane — the original "MacMillan dancer" I suppose — is ideal in the lighter-weight couple. She is getting a little careless about the feet, yet all her work has the force of a distinctive personality behind it.

Despite the various excellencies of these three, the truly outstanding performance came, in my view, from Graham Usher. Here really was a winged Mercury, and with choreography tailored most beautifully to his measure, he darted like a bird. His line was perfect, and he has the Russian ability of holding his position in the air. This struck me as by far the best thing he has ever done.

Of the eight fine soloists who make up what must be called, for want of a better word, the *corps de ballet,* I can do no better than quote the remark I heard from an ex-member of the company. He said that in his day (and it was really only the day before yesterday) all the girls would have been ballerinas and all the boys *premiers danseurs.* And I think he may have been right.

Clive Barnes.



THEIR PROWSE DESIGNS
L., Lane; R., Usher.

MUSIC

SIX choreographers in search of a composer could well represent the current state of British ballet, and it illustrates one of its most pressing problems. After sparring with Stravinsky, often very successfully, was it some inner twinge or outer prod of patriotic conscience that made Kenneth MacMillan look to a British composer to provide the music for his latest ballet? However he or anyone else arrived at it, the choice of Sir Arthur Bliss' *Music for Strings* was not a particularly happy or inspiring one in this context. Theoretically, I suppose, all music is danceable but, to adapt George Orwell, some kinds of music are more danceable than others. *Music for Strings* has many positive qualities, but danceability is not noticeably one of them.

The composer wrote it in 1935 as an exercise in "pure" music, and a counterpart to his score for the film of H. G. Wells' *Things to Come,* on which he was engaged at the same time. "Like the painter Paul Klee," wrote Sir Arthur in a programme-note a few years ago, "I wanted 'to go for a walk with a line'." Since MacMillan also likes to go for a walk with a line, choreographically speaking, and manifestly does just that in *Diversions,* the two have something in common. But Sir Arthur's exercise is in the nature of a tweedy and reflective stroll, in which rhythmic impulse is decidely subsidiary to

a predominant concern with timbre and texture.

His three movements can repay attentive listening, because his skill in exploiting a variety of resources and effects within the restricted palette of a string orchestra is perhaps the work's chief merit, and its form admirably fits the composer's ideas. In its use of multiple *divisi* passages, and the contrasts of small and large groups, it recalls the *concerti grossi* of an earlier century, but the development of the musical ideas is almost symphonic on a miniature scale. The thick, thorn-proof harmony and beefy chordal progressions overgrow whatever line it was that the composer took for a walk, and correspondingly interpose a barrier to MacMillan's choreographic intentions — an Etruscan frieze partly obscured by a Sussex hedge.

While it seemed to me that the disparate styles of music and dancing intractably refused to coalesce, the performance was considerably weakened by the orchestral playing. *Music for Strings* is a virtuoso work which makes "concerto" demands on the individual players and, as the leader

of a famous orchestra once said, "it doesn't get any easier with performance". *Ensemble*, attack, intonation and phrasing at Covent Garden were seriously wanting, in spite of John Lanchbery's forceful conducting. But the blame should squarely be laid at the door of whoever in the administration was responsible for requiring this from an orchestra the night after Solti had driven it to the limit in *Die Walküre*. Here was sweated labour indeed.

Noël Goodwin.

DECOR

IT is an odd quirk in the nature of most choreographers that they frequently object, some more than others, to anyone hanging any sort of theme or idea on to what they fondly believe to be their "abstract" ballets. Yet owing to the very nature of its component parts, of which the living dancer is undoubtedly the most important, ballet can never be truly abstract. It can, of course, be plotless and some of the ballets with the longest programme notes emerge as the most plotless on the stage.

Not much harm is done, though, if the Spectator can weave some kind of idea around these works which are seemingly intended to be plotless, somehow they then become more tangible than merely elaborate *enchaînements* placed within the proscenium arch. So it is that we might think of Ashton's *Symphonic Variations* as a song of Spring (owing to the fresh burgeoning of Fedorovitch's designs and the innocence and upsurge of Franck's score) and Balanchine's *Serenade* as a song of Winter (owing to the despair of Tchaikovsky's score and the heartache in moments of Balanchine's choreography). And if we continue this seasonal imagery then Kenneth MacMillan's *Diversions* becomes a song of Autumn even if neither the choreographer nor Bliss's *Music for Strings* suggest this time of year to the slightest degree.

The autumnal atmosphere is entirely provided by Philip Prowse's designs and whether it was MacMillan's intention that this should happen or whether this was one of those things that just happen because Prowse had some cinnamons and ochres on his palette and was feeling in a "Mediterranean" mood, I wouldn't know — nor is it particularly important that I should. Whatever the order of events, the result is that the designer has been responsible for providing time and place. The influence is decidedly Mediterranean (could be Minoan and/or Etruscan) in both costumes and setting. It is as though Gods, or surviving immortals, are performing some ritual in the ruins of a civilisation — and you can interpret *that* and hang as many modern parallels on it as you like.

One thing is certain — the ballet was originally intended to have no setting at all and be another of those ballets against blacks and in practice costume. Somebody had second thoughts and some designs were commissioned though on a very limited budget — three flats were all that the scenery must consist of. Sounds to me like the terrifying rules laid down by some of those design competitions, though in this case the results have been so successful that possibly a similar restriction might be placed on all Covent Garden designers for ballet — *and* for opera.

So there was Prowse having to make the best of three flats. What does he do? All the Minoan and/or Etruscan gods be praised, he does *not* use them for wings against the inevitable cyclorama or black curtains but turns his valuable canvas into suspended borders. Borders in perspective of massive architecture, ruined possibly, which, because their supporting structure does not exist, or rather is imagined to be hidden in deep shadow, give a far greater sense of immensity and grandeur than I have ever seen from those detailed and completed temples which often look so unconvincing in ballets — *and* operas.

Here's a lesson, indeed, and one that was learned by the Pitoëffs in Paris and others in more central Europe during the 'twenties. A lesson that could have still been learned from a careful study of what Bérard did for *Les Forains* after the last war, a lesson that up to this point has not penetrated the sturdy Byzantine construction in Bow Street. If anyone is still in doubt as to what this lesson amounts to, then here goes: The best settings in the theatre are one-third painted or constructed scenery and two-thirds imagination. Audience imagination is still the best designer the theatre has ever known and it remains for the designer to direct that imagination into whatever channel he chooses.

Prowse has counter-weighted his, what without any ground figures could have been top-heavy, setting by some wholly admirable costumes thus underlying what I have always felt — namely that costumes are the most important "scenery" in ballet. Not only do these costumes, combined with the three borders, contribute to a beautiful stage picture but they are some of the best costumes for dancing that have been seen in a plotless ballet. Costumes for girls present less of a problem — they can be based on the tutu, the leotard, the tunic or the longer Romantic ballet skirt — but those for boys are more difficult. A mass of detail and ornament often looks effeminate, over simplification (such as all-over tights) throws up bulging muscles and makes the male appear ox-like. The solution lies somewhere halfway between the two — all decoration to be within the interior lines of the garment, a flattening of any over-developed parts of the anatomy while emphasising the masculinity of the dancer as well as enhancing the general line of his body. Well, Prowse has done all that, and if you look at the design on this page you will see why I think that these are the best costumes for dancing males that I have seen for many years and which could prove to be a foundation for all future male costumes in both classical, neo-classical or modern works.

On the face of it, the costumes do not look so very different for either sex, but look again more carefully and you will see that there is a very decided difference and it would appear that Prowse has made a careful study of anatomy and of the range and limitations of bodily movement. His colours range from aubergine and black (for Beriosova and MacLeary) through weathered ochre (for Lane and Usher) to a warmer weathered cinnamon (for eight soloists), and if there is any fault to find it is possibly that those for Beriosova and MacLeary are rather too sombre to stand out against the black surround.

Not an easy ballet to light and at the early performances the lighting was decidedly too dim on the dancers and too strong on the borders. Possibly William Bundy, responsible for the lighting, should have used more cross-lighting, stronger and lower, which touched neither the black wings nor the black backcloth and just had some very low illumination on the three borders so that they were only suggested. Possibly more imagination and sense of mystery could have been employed — and possibly it already has been.

Peter Williams.

FOUR REASONS WHY PHILIP PROWSE'S COSTUMES ARE SO GOOD FOR THE MALE DANCER

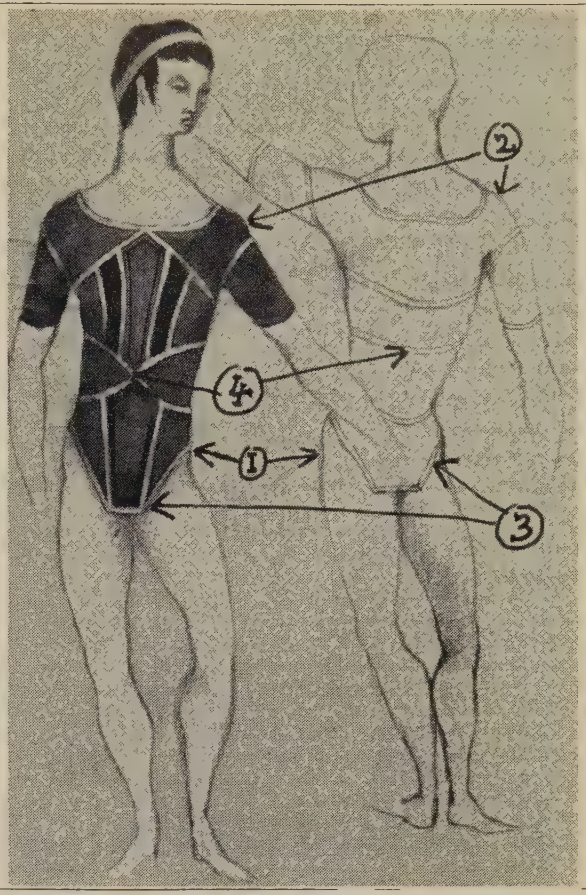
1. Long leg line giving elegance and freedom of movement.

2. Clean shoulder line which does not obscure the arm line in any position.

3. Concealing and flattering line which serves its purpose admirably without obscuring the line of the dance.

4. All decoration kept within the internal lines of the silhouette. Decoration which pays heed to anatomical lines of the body—both flattering and elegant.

The basic features of these designs should point the way to how all male costumes ought to be designed in the future, both in classical and neo-classical works.



SETTING AND CHARACTERS: Above, Isabel Lambert's permanent setting. Below, Jabez (Donald MacLeary) and his wife, Mary (Antoinette Sibley).

Jabez and the Devil

First given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, on September 15, 1961. Choreography by Alfred Rodrigues. Music by Arnold Cooke. Designed by Isabel Lambert. Lighting by John Sullivan.

Cast

Jabez, a farmer ..... DONALD MACLEARY
Mary, his wife ..... ANTOINETTE SIBLEY
Mr. Scratch, the Devil ..... ALEXANDER GRANT
The Moneylenders GERD LARSEN, RAY POWELL, FRANKLIN WHITE
A Fiddler ..... STANLEY HOLDEN
Corps de Ballet *of Village Peasants and Devil's Followers*

Photographed by ANTHONY CRICKMAY.

STORY

"MR. SCRATCH—the Devil—chooses a place to exercise his magic. Annoyed by the clumsy dancing of some peasants, he attempts to refine their uncouth ways. He finds, however, a more willing victim in Jabez Stone, a poverty-stricken farmer, who sells his soul to him.

"The landscape changes, strange followers of the Devil appear. True to his pact the Devil pays Jabez for his soul, but the latter tries to break the contract when he sees a vision of his wife possessed by the Devil.

"Mary is lamenting her husband's disappearance when Jabez returns with the money to pay his creditors. He is followed by the Devil. Mary, by praying, succeeds in tearing up the contract and the Devil is driven away. Jabez and his friends celebrate his supposed delivery. The Devil, however, claims his victim."

CHOREOGRAPHY

THE ballet was warmly received — it took 13 calls on the first night — and I have heard of one or two people of discrimination who have defended it. Yet it is the particular duty of a critic to speak as he found, and frankly I found *Jabez and the Devil* almost awe-inspiringly bad. This may or may not be the worst ballet produced by our national company since it took up occupation at the Opera House nearly 16 years ago. Opinions and tastes are (luckily) bound to differ, but were a competition to be held for that sad title, *Jabez* is certainly the runner that would go up to the starting line wearing my second-best dress-shirt.

Jabez is the seventh ballet Alfred Rodrigues has produced for the Royal Ballet, although, of course, this total includes the plotless ballet to Vivaldi (originally produced, I believe, for the Royal Danish Ballet) which was given in certain provincial towns during the company's last North American tour, but has yet to be seen in England. The new work is based apparently on a short story by the American writer, Stephen Vincent Benet, called *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. This story, which has already provided the basis for a film starring Kirk Douglas and as an opera, is unfortunately unknown to me, and my efforts to find a copy have not so far met with any success. As a consequence, I am unable to comment on how Rodrigues has adapted his source material. The story itself, at least to judge from the ballet, is

nothing more or less than a reworking of that dear old friend of our literary childhood, the Faust legend. As it has already proved irresistible to both a film scenarist and an opera librettist, I can only conclude that the original story is of rather more interest than would appear from Rodrigues' treatment in his ballet.

Of the ballet itself I have comparatively little to say, and could wish that it were nothing. There are bound to be occasions when a critic feels himself to be so completely out of sympathy with the object of his perusal that it seems to him that silence is not only the kindest course, but perhaps even the wisest. Yet he is not paid to be silent, and at times such as these this is his minor tragedy.

The ballet is cast in the form of three scenes. It opens with the entry of Mr. Scratch, who is given a sub-Massinian dance of no very great originality, and yet with its perky accents, and abrupt, grotesque poses, this is quite possibly the choreographic highlight of the ballet. It is certainly no bad start. With the introduction of the peasants the temperature of the ballet drops. These mechanicals and rustics have choreography allotted to them that both here and in the final scene appears to derive from North American folk dance, in much the same way, and to much the same extent, as the pseudo-Spanish dances in *Blood Wedding* came from *flamenco*. It is possible that Rodrigues has made a serious study of North American popular dance forms, but the resultant choreography seemed to me to be oddly lacking in any kind of quality. It was uninventive, unimaginative, a sort of jogging and clopping that got nowhere.

When Jabez Stone, the hero, and his wife Mary appear, they specialise in a very complicated form of double work. Full of quite difficult lifts, which neither enchant by their beauty nor astonish by their ingenuity, their dancing is given some scant measure of individuality (albeit an individuality that is displeasing in its pretentiousness) by the interpolation of mammoth, anguished gestures, pregnant with ill-defined emotion. If there were not more to the expressive dance than the yearning, hair-tearing and general emoting displayed here, then we might all just as well pack up our bags and go home, perhaps to watch television.

The three Puritan money-lenders who bustle through this scene wearing funny hats and caricature expressions perform a function for the story, but perform it most meanly. There seems to have been hardly any attempt to give them some form of choreographic visualisation, and they bounce around like bit players in a crowd scene who have forgotten how to say "rhubarb". They reminded me, incidentally, of Mr. Taylor's lawyers in *The Prospect Before Us*, an episode I would have preferred in all charity to have forgotten.

What happens in the second scene is not clear. The programme assures us that "the landscape changes", and certainly any fool can see that. Followers of the Devil also appear, looking like fugitives from some long-since buried ballet of the 1930's. Parts of this were, as Frank Staff might have said, *"trop symphonique"*. The dance patterns are here so unoriginal that had they been passed off as parody, one might have been happier if none the wiser. The stage picture was almost consistently congested, with groups running hither and thither to no purpose and for no reason. Yet with all this confusion the dance *ensembles* were at the same time almost formal in their symmetry. It was, I suspect, the kind of *ballabile* that killed the French ballet during the reign of Napoleon III.

The story-line at this juncture became even more obscure. Jabez had already, at the end of the previous scene, put his bloody signature to the fatal document assigning his soul to the Devil. And yet here, so far as one could tell, was the Devil tempting him with the pleasures of the flesh, the reason why I never knew and remarkably soon ceased to care.

After milling around for some time in the general *melée* of good-time Western girls partnered by men with dome-shaped bald heads, all-over tights and stiff collars (who seemed to have strayed in from another set, where they were making a science fiction film), Jabez is pulled up short by the appearance of his wife. Such a circumstance has been known to put paid to many promising parties, and in this case the matter is not made better by the fact, as the programme tells us even if the stage action doesn't, that this is actually "a vision of his wife". She is dressed as one of the honky-tonk brigade, and immediately goes into an Odile routine, full of slinky turns and seductive arm movements. This horrifies Jabez, which is the only moment of sensibility he shows throughout the course of the ballet. It also horrified me.

There follows a *pas de trois* between the Wife-temptress, Jabez and Mr. Scratch, which for sheer banality may be studied with some interest. The basis of the choreography for this *pas de trois* is quite simply repetition, for everything that is done on one side of the stage is repeated on the other, a device possibly intended to overcome some of the difficulties provided by Covent Garden's sightlines.

After the vision has evaporated Jabez tries to retrieve his contract, in the course of which efforts Mr. Scratch leads him the very devil of a dance. When the choreographic possibilities of this have been more than exhausted, the scene changes.

DILEMMA AND SOLUTION : Three Moneylenders (Powell, Larsen and White) arrive to collect their dues from Mary (Sibley, held aloft). Help arrives in the form of the Devil (Grant) who attempts to refine the villagers in the picture below.

THE REWARDS OF SOUL SELLING : Jabez (MacLeary) having sold his soul to the Devil is surrounded by the Devil's Followers dressed as Western bar-room girls. Below. Jabez gets even more enmeshed in the clutches of the Devil (Grant, aloft).

Jabez returns home to the welcoming arms of his wife. When it is seen that he has struck it rich there are general jollifications, which are interrupted by the intervention of Mr. Scratch. The story thereupon takes on an anti-Deist note. Jabez and his friends try to destroy the incriminating contract, but they are unable to do so. Mary succeeds with prayer. There follow some rustic dances of boisterous futility, ending with the discomfiture of Mr. Scratch in a jig routine that I must confess I thought had gone out with the "Broadway Melody of 1936". However, so much for the power of God and prayer, for the Devil, who apparently was only feigning defeat, comes back with the contract diabolically restored to one piece. He claims Jabez in a pay-up, pay-off curtain. Presumably the moral is : the Devil you know is better than the God you don't. I take it that theologically the work is close to heresy, and I trust the Royal Ballet take care before performing it in countries of marked Christian susceptibilities.

In fact, to be honest, I trust that the Royal Ballet will not perform it even in countries of marked aesthetic susceptibilities. There are occasions when dignity demands that losses be cut, and for my personal vote this is one of those occasions.

DANCING

DANCERS cannot really be better than the ballet in which they are dancing — and one can only say to the cast of *Jabez* what one can say to the unfortunate choreographer : "Hard luck !" Somewhere along the line the ballet, in my view, went disastrously wrong. At that stage I think the decision should have been made to abandon it, but presumably with much of the capital investment already made this was not thought expedient, or perhaps everyone concerned genuinely believed they had a success on their hands. Of course, perhaps they still do believe this.

The dancers did their best. The dancers — bless them — generally do. Alexander Grant tried hard to make Mr. Scratch a figure of sinister, grotesque humour, both funny yet at the same time threatening. His lively, alert dancing was particularly distinguished by the commanding presence conveyed by many of his static poses, and he gave a subtle, diabolical edge to his dance style. At times perhaps he overdid the knowing, sanctimonious leer, but if the temptation to inject some sort of vitality into the work by over-playing was not always avoided it seems to have been largely resisted.

Donald MacLeary's Jabez made a certain something out of a most unrewarding rôle. His imprecations against Heaven had force if not conviction, and he went through the ballet looking as worried and miserable as I felt, which was — the former, I mean — presumably what the choreographer intended. His dancing proved also strong and vigorous, and he negotiated the difficult partnering with remarkable aplomb.

Naturally, thinking as I do about the work, I feel sorry for Grant and MacLeary being involved in it. Yet both of them have had many opportunities in the past for creating rôles in far happier circumstances, and in fact MacLeary had only a few short minutes earlier been given an enviable chance in MacMillan's *Diversions*. But for Antoinette Sibley this was her very first created part, and my heart went out to her.

She brought a great deal of simple sincerity to her playing of Mary, and worked like a demon (if that's the appropriate word) to bring some kind of honest

reality to this gum-booted ninny of a wife. As the vision-temptress she was slightly less successful, her arch coquetry being rather too obvious. But who, may I ask, wouldn't have been too obvious given such mushy sweet-corn of choreography? Her dancing was always impeccable and stylish.

The company as a whole — including the moneylenders of Gerd Larsen, Ray Powell and Franklin White and the gap-toothed fiddler of Stanley Holden — did everything they were asked and kept their noses clean, some looking happier about it than others. Although I was unable to join in the enthusiastic reception Rodrigues and his cast received after the first performance, I was at least glad they got it.

Clive Barnes.

MUSIC

HAVING borrowed from Bliss and commissioned from Cooke I suppose the Royal Ballet now thinks it has done its duty by British composers (and contemporary ones at that) for a decade or so. After hearing the results it is perhaps less surprising that Ashton prefers to resurrect Hérold and Messager when his turn comes round. The disturbing aspect of it is that I fear the management really believes it has been terribly bold and enterprising and up-to-date, when, in fact, its sense of musical discrimination is so blinkered and haphazard as to be almost non-existent. Over the whole range of ballet music it must be discouraging to be reminded so often that silk purses are not made from sows' ears, but there is scant evidence that any lessons have been learned from it.

How encumbered Arnold Cooke was by the shape and content of Alfred Rodrigues' outworn little morality I do not know, but his doleful and eclectic score did little to enhance it. The composer (a onetime pupil of Hindemith) would never, I imagine, consider himself particularly *avant-garde* in musical idiom, and the other works of his that I have heard suggest a sober and rather puritanical imagination, serious and carefully-thought in intention but ultimately dry and unrewarding in character. This, I believe, is Dr. Cooke's first ballet, and he seems to have been oppressively aware of the need to divert on a lighthearted level, not hitherto a characteristic trait of his music, with the result that his score sounds like Percy Grainger without the charm.

The dances serve their rhythmic purpose, and I thought I heard some use made of thematic identification in relation to individual characters. Once the opening theme droops its weary way over a pedal bass, however, the melodic material becomes so undistinguished as to be self-effacing. I have seldom heard a more genteel representation of orgy than the composer's neo-Brahmsian waltz, and a semitonal rippling of strings fills great stretches of the score like a drab grey wash. There is a dash of Country-and-Western made respectable by the strain of bucolic-pastoral which runs through English music like a disease, and there is even a drum just in case it can help to remove any doubts about the rhythm of Mr. Scratch's oddly undevilish jig. These are random comments on a score chiefly notable for its featureless reticence. The orchestra had no more to do than play the notes in the right time and place, and they duly discharged their duty.

Noël Goodwin.

DECOR

IF MacMillan's *Diversions* was intended to be a plotless work, then Alfred Rodrigues' *Jabez and the Devil* was decidedly not, yet I find myself in a sort of maze when I try and figure out what this latter ballet was all about. I know I saw a film called *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, upon which the ballet is based, some years ago yet those obscuring sands of time have obliterated all memory of its nature. Was it a fantastic comedy, was it a morality or was it melodrama? I just cannot remember, and this ballet has done nothing to clear the befogged air.

I would think that something of this same fog must have surrounded Isabel Lambert when she settled down to design it and as she got on with it (progressed is *not* the right word here) the fog thickened until it turned into a real old pea soup. The moments of visibility ("down to ten yards" as the November forecasts frequently tell us) must have revealed to her a number of varying styles and ideas and these she has lumped together, more literally than usual, into what I hate having to record as being one of the worst bits of ballet designing since — well, don't let's rake all *that* up again.

It is distressing when a painter you admire (fishbones were her *forte* and out of them she created images of sinister beauty) descends to this level. Admittedly not all her work for the theatre has reflected her ability as a painter yet there were moments when I have been deep in admiration — in her frontcloth for *Tiresias*, in the colour if not the shape of her Andalusian setting for *Blood Wedding*, in most of her designing for *Madame Chrysanthème* and most particularly for her setting for the opera, *Electra*. I wish that there were just one moment that I could commend in what she has done for *Jabez and the Devil* but every generous impluse I have, after working overtime, cannot winkle it out.

Presumably the action is supposed to take place somewhere in America (in those Appalachian or Smokey Mountains could it be?) but the general impression is that it all takes place in the wreck of an immense upturned boat. On each of the curvaceous wings are hung implements, doubtless intended to denote the trade of Jabez, and through the vast archway (the bows of the boat having presumably rotted with time) can be seen a rocky prominence of a decidedly suggestive nature. But if all this suggests any sort of *place* to you then I'm afraid I have missed out on something.

Against all this the villagers are things "of shreds and patches" and create no impression whatsoever. More decisive are three Moneylenders and Mr. Scratch, the Devil. They at least have a clear-cut silhouette, are in plain black and charcoal grey, and have a certain caricature in their line, even if the headgear of the three former beings is more Welsh than anything

Continued on page 38

A WIFE TRANSFORMED: The Devil (Grant) conjures up a vision for Jabez (MacLeary) of his wife, Mary (Sibley) transformed into a bar-room seductress.

Edinburgh's Triple Bill in London

RENARD : *The front cloth in black and white designed by Australian painter, Arthur Boyd.*

Three works using song and dance were revived for this year's Edinburgh Festival. Immediately after they were shown during a week's season at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. The works were Stravinsky's Renard, **Kurt Weill's** Seven Deadly Sins **and Darius Milhaud's** Salade.

Photographed by
ANTHONY CRICKMAY

IT has, I think, been generally agreed that the last Edinburgh Festival — the first under the artistic direction of the Earl of Harewood — was the most successful in the Festival's history. Both in programming and execution, it showed a boldness and enterprise that have only too often been lacking in the past. The difficulty of showing either boldness or enterprise with regard to the ballet at the Edinburgh Festival can hardly be over-emphasised, and I can well imagine the fevered discussions that must have preceded the decision to drop ballet entirely, as such, from the Festival prospectus. Naturally all balletgoers will feel regret that for the first time ballet was not included, even so that regret must surely be tinged with sympathetic understanding. It is immensely hard to get a suitable foreign attraction which is an economic possibility, and having once got it, there is only the old Empire Theatre in which to place it.

The compromise solution arrived at was to present a "Triple Bill" consisting of ballets which all utilised singers. The three works chosen were Milhaud's *Salade,* Stravinsky's *Renard* and the Brecht/Weill *The Seven Deadly Sins.* These, which were all offered as "typical products of the 20th-century's tendency to jettison traditional and hide-bound forms", were not perhaps a very well-chosen selection of the particular *genre.* As I hope to indicate, neither *Salade* nor *Renard* can be regarded as viable stage works, and it was perhaps a pity that George Balanchine was not imported to reproduce his original version of *The Seven Deadly Sins.* This, together with, say, a revival of Ashton's *A Wedding Bouquet* (a work which would have fallen within the programme's terms of reference) and possibly a new work on these lines from either Robbins or MacMillan, could have provided a really interesting evening. Furthermore, at least the Ashton piece could have been a permanent addition to the repertory of Western Theatre Ballet, who acted as host-company, as it were, for this "Triple Bill" programme. As it was, the programme was seen for its week in Edinburgh, had a further week at Sadler's Wells sponsored by Rostrum, Ltd., and then a final week at the Leeds Festival. After that it appeared that the works would have to be dropped, presumably for ever, a course of action which does not appeal to my naturally frugal nature.

THE PROGRAMME

IT was a most unfortunate choice to include Milhaud's *Salade,* an occasional piece if ever there was one, whose occasion has long since past. The work was first produced in 1924 at one of the *Soirées* organised by Comte Etienne de Beaumont. It then had choreography by Leonide Massine, and was again produced ten years later in a new version by Serge Lifar at the Paris Opéra. The *commedia dell'arte* plot is as pointless as it is involved, a wild succession of amorous intrigues, disguises and ambushes, and Milhaud's music now sounds vapidly nerveless.

The score employs a group of singers who act as a running commentary to the action. As the story emerges painfully from the songs, the dancers sub-title the action with antic fury. The words by Albert Flament (translated here by Rollo H. Myers) have a banality which doubtless aims at the chic, but misses by a mile. Phrases like: "My good guardian is much too severe" lack quite a lot in vigour of expression, and when we arrive at the moral of the whole piece, namely "Love alone makes us happy, for love makes the world go round", one is forced to consider furiously whether the libretto has made a very weighty contribution to the ballet's theatrical effectiveness.

It is the nature of the beast, that the choreography has to be in short, sharp bursts, funny little patches of comment, interspersed with background action that might possibly be described as a general mumble of movement. Peter Darrell, the not very lucky man chosen to push out this particularly leaky boat, has turned up with some jerky approximations to the Massine grotesque manner. It has its few moments such as when one of the lovers (I forget which, if I ever knew) is reading a letter, while one of the guardians (ditto) steals up to read it over his shoulder. Also the Peruvian cabaret episode (three of the characters at one point disguise themselves as two Peruvians and a llama) is produced with a good-natured humour, and here even Milhaud is perked up by his love of Latin-American rhythms.

In Edinburgh the singers, the men wearing the sort of naval uniforms one only sees in advertisements, lumbered up the stage, but at Sadler's Wells they were very properly dispatched to the orchestra pit. This, together with the here confining benefits of the smaller stage, worked some improvement on *Salade,* but did not succeed in shaking my impression that it would have been better left in the revered, but conveniently forgotten, box-room of ballet history.

Following this sadly wilting green *Salade,* Stravinsky's *Renard* proved a quite different kettle of fish, but had hardly been any more successfully prepared. As Eric Walter White in his perceptive study, *Stravinsky,* has said, *Renard* "has a curiously static quality", and he goes on to call this work "a burlesque cantata with incidental stage action", comparing it with Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf,* and pointing out that Prokofiev "is more effective in the theatre; *Renard* more satisfying in the concert hall or studio". Nothing could be closer to the truth.

Stravinsky completed the score in 1917, and it was first performed at the house of the Princesse Edmond de Polignac. The Diaghilev Ballet made two attempts to stage the work, the first was in 1922, when it was produced by Bronislava Nijinska in a version that won high praise from

Stravinsky himself in his autobiography. Later it was reworked by Serge Lifar, when he made his début as a choreographer in 1929. For the present version the Edinburgh Festival invited Alfred Rodrigues to create the choreography, and he seems to have returned so far as possible to the fair-ground conception of Nijinska.

The terribly simple Russian fable of a Fox's efforts to kill a Cock, and his outwitting by a Goat and a Cat, is indecently bare of dramatic interest. Even so, allowing for the fact that Rodrigues' task must have been fearsomely difficult, his resulting choreography is a long call from distinguished. Written while Stravinsky was a wartime exile in Switzerland, the work is strongly Russian in feeling and essentially folklorist in nature. This feeling for Russia in general and the Russian peasant in particular appears to have been completely ignored by Rodrigues, whose approach apparently has something in common with a Roland Petit music-hall number. There was a great deal of strutting, prancing and slinking, a good bit of comic animal posing and any amount of other business. Of actual creative choreography, I personally noticed little.

The music gained nothing and indeed lost much by this kind of distracting staging. The score was, however, very well performed by the Scottish National Orchestra (in the pit, not on the stage, as Stravinsky instructed) conducted by Alexander Gibson. The singing of Murray Dickie, Alfred Hallett, John Lawrenson and Trevor Anthony was equally admirable.

By far the most successful of this "Triple Bill" was the great Kurt Weill/Berthold Brecht work, *The Seven Deadly Sins*. This had originally been commissioned for Les Ballets 1933 by the company's patron, Edward James, who wanted a part for his ballerina-wife, Tilly Losch. At a time when interest in Kurt Weill is mounting rapidly, this revival was timely and, in the event, proved immensely entertaining. On the other hand Kenneth MacMillan's new version lacked a great deal in style and its success was more that implicit in the work itself than in MacMillan's new production.

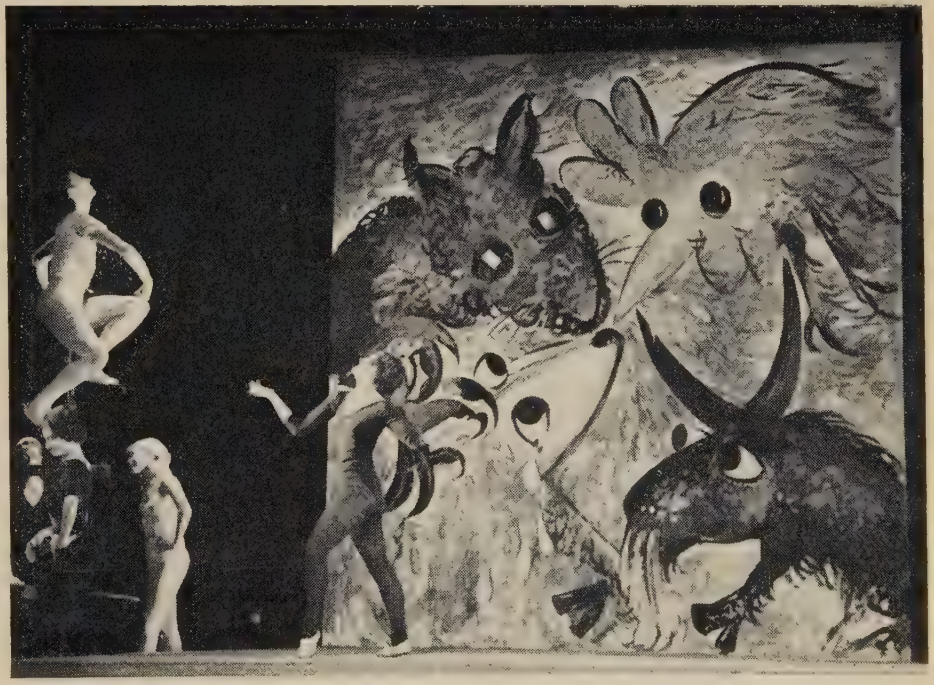
The Seven Deadly Sins of the Petit-Bourgeois is a blazingly satiric attack on middle-class morality and materialism. In essence it is a Marxist attack on capitalism, and is one of the most brilliant satirical works of our, or any other, time. It is an angry work, and one meant to shock and horrify as well as amuse with its bitter irony.

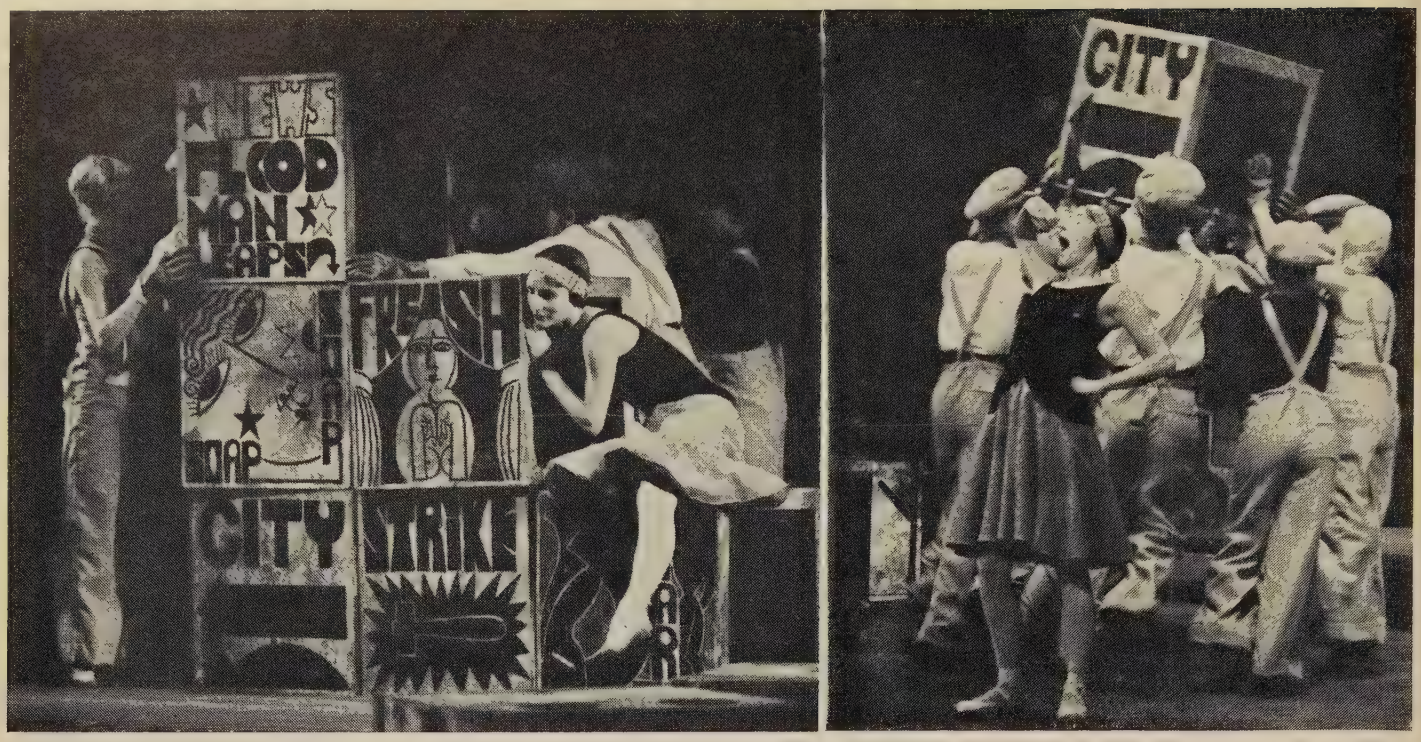
The story is about Anna/Anna, who represents Brecht's view of the split personality of the bourgeois capitalist. The part is divided, quite logically, into the "dancing Anna" who personifies the warm impulses of instinct, and the "singing Anna" who personifies the cold light of reason. Anna/Anna leaves her "little home in Louisiana" to travel across America. She comes to seven cities and in each city encounters one of the seven capital sins. She makes good, triumphing in turn over each sin, and with each triumph she can send back money to her family in Louisiana, who use it to build a house. At the end, her journey done, she returns contented to her new house.

This morality play sounds conventional enough. It acquires its originality and searing bitterness from Brecht's conception of the various sins, which disregard the principles of normal (Brecht would say hypocritical) Christian ethics and are seen cynically (Brecht would say realistically) as sins against bourgeois society. In this light, virtue is that which is commercially expedient, vice is inexpedient. For example, "Lust" as presented by Brecht is not the pure and simple act of infidelity prompted by animal instinct, but Anna's specific betrayal of the rich man who keeps her as his mistress, with a poor man whom she loves. The Bible has been replaced by the Wall Street Journal, the world is a jungle in which self-interest is all, and lucky is the man who can declare, "I'm all right, Jack !".

KENARD: *Above and below, two incidents from the main scene of the Stravinsky work. The dancers are in practice costume against Arthur Boyd's setting.*

The drama and the corrosive humour comes from the interplay between the two faces of Anna, where head is constantly having to rule heart, as the singing Anna keeps her wayward "sister" on the straight and narrow Main Street that leads to the Bank. The irony of the situation is underlined by the choruses of Anna's family, sitting at the side of the stage, relentlessly building up, hideous plank by hideous plank, the house around them, while all





THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS. *Anya Linden, as Anna, in two moments from the 'Sloth" episode at the beginning of the work. Some of Ian Spurling's original designs for this work can be seen on page 31 of the September* Dance and Dancers.

the time extolling the strict Lutheran virtues and exhorting Anna to make good in the big cities.

There is a depth and viciousness here which this new production only hints at. The cold hatred has been warmed up, the rough, rasping satire glossed over, while in more than one episode the purpose appears to have been misunderstood. Chiefly this seems to have come from MacMillan's failure to comprehend that he was dealing with a *social* satire, which has blunted the cutting edge of a script already softened by the slick translation undertaken by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallmann.

MacMillan's choreography varies considerably. The cabaret episode for "Pride" — Anna's pride takes the form of imagining that the night-club customers have come to see her art and not just to gloat over her naked body — has a sleazy bite to it, and the introduction of travesty males into the routines was a nicely authentic touch. But for the most part MacMillan has neither caught the puppet-spirit of German expressionism nor, which would have been equally valid, given that expressionism a new orientation. You need the ability here to make seemingly trivial dancing memorable, and to explain precisely what I mean I can only refer by example to Antony Tudor's Weill ballet, *Judgment of Paris*

It is understandable I think that Weill's widow, Lotte Lenya, who was to have sung Anna, withdrew during the rehearsals. As anyone who has heard her celebrated recording of the piece will agree, her conception of it and the one seen in Edinburgh and London are poles apart. Her replacement, the jazz-singer Cleo Laine, unfortunately only added to the discrepancy. Laine is a superb jazz singer but this is not jazz, and deep down where it matters her phrasing could hardly have been more wrong if she had applied the same technique to Handel's *Messiah.* What is more, her huge, warm-hearted personality proved quite wrong for the coldly calculating Anna. The lovable Cleo — thank God ! — just ain't that kind of a girl.

But, strangely enough, *The Seven Deadly Sins* did not entirely deserve the clutch of cold, disparaging notices it collected in Edinburgh, from me among many others. What most of us under-estimated, in our egg-headed, pig-headed, but, I must still insist, entirely justifiable anxiety to be analytically fair to the intentions of Weill and Brecht, was the sheer, joyous entertainment value of the music. We had little excuse really, because most of us drifted out of Edinburgh's Empire Theatre and went along to see Juliette Greco in late-night cabaret. Among Greco's numbers was the Brecht/Weill (prettified into French) *Mack the Knife,* and as the marvellous Greco, statuesque and ageless in black, sexily punched out the number with exquisitely right wrongness, this if anything should have reminded us of the indestructible quality of Weill's invention.

In the same way, wrong as Cleo Laine was, she put the numbers over with such panache and polish that they were instinctively enjoyable if rationally incorrect. I fear she unwittingly exposed one of the "Deadly Sins of the Petit-Bourgeois Critics", and I for one feel I was wrong to let my mind have so much sway, when (in London at least) my heart got such a lift. Similarly, although they were perhaps treated with more justice, I wonder if quite sufficient tribute was paid to the Scottish National Orchestra and its conductor Alexander Gibson, who played scrupulously fair by Weill and added so much to the music's pleasure.

So there it is. Two misses and a dubious hit, no very impressive score for such an ambitious undertaking. I think that had much more care and imagination gone into the planning of the programme, the results could have been infinitely better. Yet it *was* ambitious, it *was* audacious, it *was* imaginative, and best of all it *was* the kind of thing Festivals are made for. Next year I hope Lord Harewood (unless he can capture some staggering dance attraction such as New York City Ballet, the Bolshoi, the Danes, or Martha Graham) will feel encouraged to repeat some such dance experiment. This is so much preferable than merely using the Festival as a whistle-stop on a Royal Ballet provincial tour. But I also hope that he might give a thought to the possibility of doing something in Edinburgh that could be of permanent advantage to the repertory of the participating company. It does seem such a pity that these three expensively mounted works now *have* to go to waste, irrespective of their merits.

THE DANCERS

IT was very gratifying to see the tiny Western Theatre Ballet promoted to the major league of an international festival. This was a bright and kindly thought on someone's part. Unfortunately the nature of the entertainment was such that the dancers did not get any unduly large opportunity to shine. In *Salade* they went at their rôles with vigour, Laverne Meyer and Oliver Symons being particularly noteworthy. Yet perhaps more crispness of execution might have given Peter Darrell's choreography a more creditable Massinian gloss.

In *Renard,* the title rôle was finely played by Suzanne Musitz, as Rodrigues followed the original Nijinska precedent of having the Fox played by a woman. Musitz's urchin humour and vivid personality did everything that could be done to make sense out of the ballet's chaos, and Dennis Griffiths was appropriately weakly amusing as the Cock.

In *The Seven Deadly Sins,* Anya Linden (a guest artist, of course) in her way proved almost as miscast as Cleo Laine. Her impulsiveness was a shade too virginal for the warm-hearted Anna, but within this conception she danced beautifully and acted with a touching tenderness, and here and there glints of fey humour. She also looked

magnificent — a fringed and dark-haired version of the Blue Angel.

The whole company danced and acted with intelligence, and I particularly liked Erling Sunde's rich Protector (shades of Leeder in Jooss's *The Big City)* in the "Lust" episode, while Peter Cazalet was good as the Waiter in "Gluttony".

Clive Barnes.

DECOR

"ONE thing is sure — it (the Triple Bill in Edinburgh and London) was the best designed group of works to be seen in London since the great days of Roland Petit's companies." So I said in an editorial last month and so I meant — every word of it. Of course, there are people in this country who didn't think that Petit's ballets *were* well designed. "Too chi-chi, too French," they declared and my answer to that is four-lettered plus an "s" for plurality. Admittedly, some of that designing had an ephemeral air about it but butterflies are ephemeral also, and to my way of thinking they are some of the most beautiful things to skim the face of this globe. It was possibly this very quality that made the Triple Bill so visually exciting for me and such a relief after the spate of creations supposedly designed to last.

The problem of designing for the type of song-and-dance work (egg-headed musicals really) is complicated, possibly more interesting though than designing just for ballet or opera. The designer has to contend with dancers and singers who sometimes are off stage, sometimes on and sometimes a part of the action. No rules can be laid down and each designer has to solve the problem in a different way. Let us see how these were solved.

RENARD: A bit of a poser this one and, if the truth be admitted, neither Larionov nor Goncharova got completely to grips with it and I cannot feel either that Australian designer, Arthur Boyd, has really solved the problem though he has made a highly commendable attempt.

Following the form of the two Diaghilev productions in seeing the fable as a fair-booth drama, Boyd's principal scenery amounted to two vast banners such as are displayed along the Midway to attract the customers. Apart from these banners, one for the exterior and the other for the interior of the booth, the rest of the scenery consisted of a small platform, centre, a bear-pole for a tree and all suspended in black curtain space. Reverting to the painter trick which was so successful in Ben Shahn's setting for *New York Export, Op. Jazz,* namely of draining colour out of one setting and pouring it into another, Boyd opens with a cloth showing a group of animals in a death scuffle and all in black calligraphic lines on white. This folds away and the setting, the interior, shows the same animals poised for battle but in colour.

The black and white canvas is beautifully executed and has a flow and sensitivity in its composition that owes much to Japanese masters of line. The main, and coloured, setting owes something in its approach to Chagall, possibly a little too much for it tends to overpower the dancers and the action. Personally, I should have been quite content to listen to Stravinsky's score and just look at both these cloths for they underline and supplement the drama in the music to a far greater extent than could any actual production.

Boyd's weakness, as with so many painters working in the theatre for the first time, lies in his costumes. He rather shirked the issue by giving the dancers all-over tights with additions—additions which gave lie to the beast or bird in question. Even if they were not very stimulating, the remainder of his designing was such that it marked a most auspicious début in the theatre of a fine painter, whose name I hope will be seen more in ballet programmes.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: *Two more scenes from MacMillan's version of the Kurt Weill work. Above, from the "Pride" episode with Anya Linden, as Anna, on the right; Laverne Meyer and Oliver Symons in a travesty cabaret number, centre.*

Below, Linden in the "Lust" episode. The bandeau which Linden wears was not worn in actual performance.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: You can no more re-create the theatre of the 'thirties than you can that of the 'twenties and don't kid yourself for one second that manifestations like the *Boy Friend,* delicious pastiche as it was, had the true feeling of that strange mixture of wildness and primness which formed the amalgam of an essentially naïve era. It was not the manner in which things were put on in those days but the whole attitude and

Continued on page 39

SURVEY IN TOKYO: John Field, Assistant Director of the Royal Ballet's smaller company, looks at the poster in Japanese announcing the company's appearance at the Metropolitan Festival Hall in Tokyo they opened.

Turning Eastward

The general trend of the Royal Ballet's touring during 1961 has been eastward. Apart from the Covent Garden company's first visit to Russia, the smaller section went to the Far East in April and May, then to the Middle East in August and September. It is about these tours and the conditions they found in the various countries that JOHN FIELD, the company's Assistant Director, talked to Dance and Dancers.

Photographed by RALPH MACE.

JAPAN (April 19 – May 14): The way was well prepared by John Sullivan, Technical Director at Covent Garden, who flew to Tokyo eight weeks ahead of the company so as to sort out all the technical problems and also to arrange for the scenery to be built and painted. The company that arrived in the first weeks of April consisted of the full personnel of the Royal Ballet's touring company supplemented by Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes, for Japan only, and Beryl Grey, Anya Linden and Brian Shaw for the whole of the Far Eastern tour.

The company was lucky in that it had a full week of rehearsal in Tokyo before starting on April 17 when they provided the opening performances in Tokyo's just-completed Metropolitan Festival Hall. This theatre is well designed and has every type of modern stage equipment, with everything electrically controlled. They found the Japanese extremely friendly and co-operative, especially the stage staff who went to endless trouble to provide the visitors with all they wanted.

The scenery had been copied most faithfully and the only fault was that an over-zealous scene painter had straightened all the lines in Nicholas Georgiadis' setting for *Danses Concertantes* — this was promptly repainted. The fact that the stages were twice the size of the stages upon which the company usually plays at home, resulting in the scenery also being twice the size, caused a few complications as the productions had to be rearranged to fill out the spaces. Owing to the co-operation of the stage staff, these difficulties were overcome.

Another surprise came with the fact that the orchestra was quite familiar with the music of all the ballets (the touring repertory consisted of *Le Lac des Cynes, Giselle, Les Sylphides, Les Patineurs, Checkmate, Danses Concertantes* and *Solitaire).* Possibly less surprising when it is realised that in Tokyo alone they have nineteen regular ballet companies.

The seasons were very successful and it was encouraging to see how the bookings mounted after first days (the theatres have a capacity of about 3,000). So successful was the season in Tokyo that after going on to the Osaka Festival, the company returned for a further season in Tokyo.

The notices were very good and the critics in Japan obviously have a sound knowledge of the art — both from reading most of what is written about ballet and also owing to the fact that so many famous companies and so many stars have danced there in the past. It appeared that the Japanese have a preference for dramatic works and this is rather understandable considering the background of Kabuki and Noh drama which has formed a part of all their lives. But if they particularly liked De Valois' *Checkmate* with Beryl Grey as the Black Queen) they also enjoyed plotless works such as MacMillan's *Danses Concertantes.* In addition to the great success of Margot Fonteyn, they also particularly liked Doreen Wells.

The performances were photographed by no less than six television companies. Not only is television extremely popular but everyone appeared to have a camera. In fact, so many people started to photograph the rehearsals, and so impossible did it become to rehearse, that the theatre had to be cleared of photographers.

GETTING TOGETHER WITH THE ORIENT: Left, Members of the company eating "Tempura" in Japanese style (left to right, Judith Maden, Michael Coleman, Phyllis Spira, Jennifer Layland, Denise Thomas, Janet Burgess). Right, Lynn Seymour buys lanterns.

Needless to say, the dancers, as dancers invariably do, got to grips with their surroundings and with local customs. The whole company ate with chopsticks and at receptions they sat on the floor as is customary in those parts.

HONG KONG (May 16 – 17): At the Lee Theatre, where the company played, conditions were very different. Nothing had been prepared, what equipment there was seemed to be broken. There was no orchestra and the performances had to be given with two pianos and in black drapes. Fonteyn was never scheduled to be with the company here and there was a certain confusion caused by the fact that her name appeared on the posters. In spite of these hopeless conditions, the sort of nightmare that causes directors and stage directors to wake up screaming in the night, the show went on and was much liked. But the company, as usual, doing everything to put the performances over, felt that the audiences were not getting anything like a true picture of what they could do. It was a pity and seems to be a state of affairs that will get no better there until the promised new civic centre is completed.

MANILA (May 19 – 20): The company flew to the Philippines and found no expense had been spared to make their visit a success. The performances which had been made possible by *The Philippine Herald* and Colonel Soriano amongst others had been carefully prepared owing to Ralph Zuluetta flying to see the company when it was in Japan. This resulted in the backstage of the Rizal Theatre being entirely reconstructed with new dressing rooms, showers and air-conditioning. The orchestra was very good, enthusiastic and had taken endless pains to get everything right, the musicians even demanding extra rehearsals with no pay so as to master the intricacies of Stravinsky's *Danses Concertantes.* The four performances *(Les Sylphides, Swan Lake* Act 2, *Les Patineurs, Danses Concertanes, Solitaire* and the *Don Quixote pas de deux)* were greeted with tremendous enthusiasm.

After the performances the police stopped all the traffic so that the company could get away easily and on to the parties and receptions given for them, which were many and wonderful. One day the Bayanihan company (well-known in England) took the whole Royal Ballet out into the country where they gave a performance of their beautiful Philippine folklore. With many regrets, for the whole Far Eastern tour had been a revelation to the dancers, the company flew home to dance in the English provinces.

BAALBECK (August 29 – September 1): The Royal Ballet's touring company for this tour was augmented by Margot Fonteyn and David Blair, who stayed throughout, and also with Frederick Ashton as artistic director. After one night in Beirut, the company moved up to Baalbeck where they had one day for rehearsal. Situated differently to Ballet Rambert who played there two years ago, the company danced on the steps of the Temple of Bacchus.

The two programmes (given on four evenings) consisted of *Les Patineurs, Swan Lake* Act 3 and *Les Rendezvous* in one; *Danses Concertantes, Swan Lake* Act 2 and Solitaire in the other. Fonteyn and Blair danced in the "Lac" section at each performance. The company toured its own orchestra of 47.

During the short rehearsal time available, Ashton adapted the ballets to fit in with the vastness of the temples. Thus, in *Swan Lake,* for instance, Von Rothbart appeared on a broken column and Prince Siegfried and Benno could be seen approaching from afar. These and many other production details and adaptations to all the others works gave them a new magic. If you have to play against some of the greatest temples in the world then obviously you have to try and match up to them somehow and a great deal of the tremendous success that the company had in the Lebanon was due to Ashton's production.

SWAN LAKE *IN BAALBECK: Margot Fonteyn and David Blair, guests with the touring company, at the Baalbeck Festival in the Lebanon. The pillars of the temple of Jupiter can be seen in the distance.*

Here again the company was helped by the enthusiasm of the local stage staff and by that admirable committee who make the Baalbeck Festival possible. After a hectic week the company moved over the frontier into Syria.

DAMASCUS (September 2 – 3): After a very cordial welcome at the frontier, when the coach was stopped and civilities exchanged including coffee drinking, the company continued on to Damascus. The two performances took place in a vast tent with a canvas roof and they received a great welcome. Here they found themselves in the heart of the Middle East as one always imagines it to be — camel caravans, water carriers, bazaars and things little changed from the days of the Bible. After two days of intense heat they flew off to Greece.

ATHENS (September 6 – 8): After a day's rehearsal, during which Ashton again adapted the repertory to suit the prevailing conditions, the company opened in the Herodias Atticus Theatre (capacity around 5,000). Here the company had a new experience owing to the fact that the auditorium of the ancient arena was so steeply raked that it gave the impression, from the stage, of facing a wall of people almost as close as the orchestra. Unnerving as this was, the dancers soon adjusted themselves and these three performances were received with ovations such as had not been heard on this or any other tour. Fonteyn and Blair had to repeat the *Swan Lake pas de deux,* something almost unknown from Fonteyn who never gives "encores".

Throughout the tour, Fonteyn was dancing at the top of her form and proved to be as much of an inspiration to the audience as she did to the young dancers with whom she was working — both on and off stage.

This tour of Middle Eastern festivals was undoubtedly a triumphant one and it now seems obvious that many tours of this kind to festivals will have to be undertaken by the Royal Ballet in future, and will become an integral part of the company's work.

ROOTS OF THE BLUES: *Alvin Ailey with Carmen De Lavallade in two moments from Ailey's* Roots of the Blues, *which has had such a success in the Boston Arts Festival, in New York's Lewisohn Stadium and at Jacob's Pillow.*
Photos: Right, by John Lindquist; Left, by Will Rapport.

Roots of the Blues

Alvin Ailey, young American Negro dancer and choreographer, who, with his group, has recently been acclaimed, explains some of his creations.

by ARTHUR TODD

ALVIN AILEY, the notable young American dancer and choreographer, made a major impression in three key areas with a major new dance work, *Roots of the Blues,* in which his partner was guest star Carmen De Lavallade, as well as with other new works and important revivals for his noteworthy concert group. National interest was first focused on Alvin Ailey and Carmen De Lavallade in his stirring new duet, *Roots of the Blues,* when it was given its world première at The Tenth Annual Boston Arts Festival last June (See August 1961 issue of *Dance and Dancers*) and this was heightened when Ailey and De Lavallade shared a programme in New York City with Maria Tallchief and Erik Bruhn later in the season at Lewisohn Stadium, a huge outdoor arena. The final stamp of success, if any more were needed, came about when Alvin Ailey and his Company shared a series of programmes at Ted Shawn's Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, where they appeared at alternate performances with Maria Tallchief and Erik Bruhn and Lupe Serrano and Royes Fernandez.

For many who were unable to make the somewhat inconvenient journey to Jacob's Pillow, Alvin Ailey presented a preview or dress rehearsal as it were, the preceding Saturday evening at Clarke Center Y.W.C.A. in New York City, the base for his current school and performing programme. Thus, it was possible for many to see *Roots of the Blues* a second time in New York City as well as have an advance view of the other works that made such a success at Jacob's Pillow.

Alvin Ailey, who is extremely articulate about his own work and aims, has provided a running commentary on these works that describes them exclusively for *Dance and Dancers* in a vivid and extraordinary manner.

Of his new duet, *Roots of the Blues,* he says, "In this dance I go back to the blues (what a love affair I've always had with these songs!) songs that I've explored before in *Blues Suite*, a much longer work than *Roots*. I call this new dance by this name because I feel that in it I have tried harder to explore the pain, desolation, frustrations, heart-aches, lost-love and social discontent of the Southern Negro. The setting is a 'barrelhouse' and Carmen De Lavallade and I portray two people caught in this milieu. I wanted the dance to have a raw and impromptu look — to appear un-set and un-rehearsed. Actually, I feel I owe my partner a great deal of the success of the work because her talent made her into this earthy creature. Also, we had with us in its creation the inspired singing of Brother John Sellers, who brought a truth and beauty to these marvellous songs."

"*Gillespiana*", continues Alvin Ailey, "is a dance for five in a very light mood. I'd call it a curtain-raiser. I have taken the inspiration for the dance mainly from the music — a sinuous 6 rhythm with drums softly underneath and the velvet of Dizzy Gillespie's muted trumpet gliding smoothly and surely over all. It is, too, in many ways, a 'music-visualization' of jazz music — the freedom — the interplay between dancers and instruments — the feeling of improvization — a series of divertissements to introduce the Company to the audience."

Revelations is another one of Alvin Ailey's masterpieces and its basis is a suite of Negro spirituals. He adds, "These are dances and songs I feel very personally about — they are intimately connected with my memories of the Baptist Church when I was a child in Texas — baptismals by tree-shrouded lakes, in a lake where an ancient alligator was supposed to have lived — the holy-rollers' tambourines shrieking in the Texas night. When I first finished this suite, there were 15 numbers in it. They are now pared to a mere 9 and divided into three sections. The first general title is 'Pilgrim of Sorrow', a sampling of the 'dark spirituals' — songs that yearn for deliverance, songs that speak of trouble, of this world's trials and tribulations. In this group we have 'I Been 'Buked', danced by the entire Company; 'Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?', a trio for myself and two women; and 'Fix Me, Jesus', a duet for two stunning soloists, Minnie Marshall and James Truitte."

"The middle section has to do with the ritual of baptism and in it I have tried to suggest the Afro-Brazilian fetishist rituals and their influence on the Church (at least the one I knew or remember, anyway). The songs are 'Honor, Honor' and 'Wade In The Water' — very primitive in feeling with movements that relate directly to the singers and musicians investigating the sources. This group concluded with 'I Wanna Be Ready', a solo for James Truitte."

"The third and final group is entitled 'Move, Members, Move!' and takes its inspirations from the gospel church. In this section we introduce brilliant colour

TO JOSE CLEMENTE OROZCO : *Alvin Ailey and Carmen de Lavallade in Lester Horton's* Dedications in Our Time.
Photo : Lindquist.

in the costuming, a realistic and contemporary approach to the spirituals as they have become song-sermons, holy blues and ring shouts. 'Sinner Man' is a solo I devised for myself — a man fleeing the voice which always asks, 'Where you gonna run to ?'. The 'Preaching Spiritual' presents the women of the Company in a whispery gospel admonishing all that 'God-Almighty Gonna Cut You Down !'. 'Rocka My Soul' ends the suite on a note of ecstatic praise with the whole Company emulating the Holy-Rollers to the accompaniment of drums and tambourine."

"*Revelations* is the second part of a four-section work which I hope will eventually become a whole evening's work with singer and musicians investigating the history of the Negro in America. Other sections will include groups of chain gang songs, street-calls, Dixieland, Chicago and contemporary jazz."

Two works not choreographed by Alvin Ailey were also on the programme at The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. One of these was *To José Clemente Orozco,* a duet choreographed by Alvin Ailey's former teacher, Lester Horton, in the Spring of 1953 for a season at his Dance Theatre in Los Angeles. It is one dance of a series, a suite called *Dedications In Our Time.* "*Orozco* ", claims Alvin Ailey, "derives straight from the paintings of this Mexican artist of the Mexican Revolution — a sorrowing man and woman seek strength in the earth, fight a simulated battle and, finally, find the strength to go on. This, I feel, is one of Carmen De Lavallade's greatest rôles. With her tremendous ability as an actress and dancer and, of course, her great personal beauty, she is at once in face and movement the reboso-shrouded Mexican woman and the proud, defiant Soldadera of Orozco's paintings. I believe that Lester Horton put into this duet some of his most imaginative, inventive and marvellously meaningful dance imagery. The exciting series of turns, jumps, crawls, falls which make up the choreography come out of one of Horton's most inspired periods of choreography."

Letter To A Beloved, choreographed as a solo dance for Carmen De Lavallade by John Butler, is set to a section of Ravel's Quartet in F. As Alvin Ailey sees this : "In it a Renaissance lady sits reading a letter (whether the letter is to the lady or from her to someone is left to the audience's imagination) and it is marvellous to see what Carmen De Lavallade does with this raw material, the dramatic colours and changes of emotional and physical dynamics that she brings to the work. A very interesting facet of the dance is the enormous green gown with a long train she wears. She uses the train organically in the ballet with the deftness of a St. Denis."

Alvin Ailey has been most fortunate in that his company at this time comprises a group of people who have studied with him for quite a while and so he was able to communicate to them, or they understood, what was needed to make that necessary connection between the dance and the on-looker. Both Carmen De Lavallade and James Truitte had their initial training with Lester Horton in Los Angeles, as did Alvin Ailey. In addition, there is Minnie Marshall, who also has studied with Martha Graham, Hanya Holm and Charles Weidman, who previously appeared in all of Ailey's New York concerts. The other member of this company is Ella Thompson, an alumnus of the Katherine Dunham School, who also danced on Broadway in *West Side Story, Jamaica* and *The House of Flowers.*

As we go to press, Alvin Ailey is acting in a non-dance rôle in *Ding Dong Bell,* while Carmen De Lavallade and James Truitte are dancing in Pearl Bailey's night club act in Las Vegas. Minnie Marshall is dancing in *Kwamina,* choreographed by Agnes de Mille, and Ella Thompson is a featured dancer-singer-actress in *Kicks and Co.,* the new musical due in New York next month. Soon, Ailey and Truitte will also resume teaching in New York. One surmises, however, that it won't be too long before all of these marvellous dancers get together again and make more history. This next time, one hopes, they will tour America and then give the rest of the world a chance to see one of the most vital, compelling and exciting dance groups of our time.

"I BEEN 'BUKED" : *opening spiritual from Ailey's* Revelations *with Ailey, Myrna White, James Truitte, Ella Thompson and Minnie Marshall.*
Photo : Lindquist.

GIFTS FROM RUSSIA: M. Oberlensky's design for the panorama scene in the Bolshoi's new production of The Sleeping Beauty. *This was one of the gifts to the Royal Ballet during their season in Moscow. On the inset panel is written "Part of the panorama from the ballet* The Sleeping Beauty *by P. I. Tchaikovsky, by M. Oberlensky. On the lower plaque is written, "To the Royal Ballet of Great Britain from the Bolshoi Theatre."*

Another gift was a 16 inch high silver and crystal goblet presented to the Royal Ballet by the Leningrad State Kirov Ballet. The inscription on the base reads "From the company of the Kirov Theatre in memory of the Royal Ballet season 15th-25th June, 1961. Leningrad." Photo: Donald Southern.

curtain up!

From far and wide

AS I told you last month, Rudolf Nureyev (former Kirov star and now with the de Cuevas company) will be the main attraction of Dame Margot Fonteyn's Gala Matinée for the Royal Academy of Dancing at Drury Lane on November 2. Added spice to his appearance is provided by the fact that he is to dance a solo specially choreographed for him by Frederick Ashton in addition to dancing a solo from *Le Corsair,* which he would have danced with the Kirov Ballet at Covent Garden if he had ever made the trip. Already Nureyev has appeared in London, though not before the public. He came over to take class with the Royal Ballet though even they did not know who he was, or most of them didn't. Appearing under an assumed name to keep the Press at bay he repeatedly denied that he was Nureyev when he was asked by inquisitive though observant members of the company.

But Fonteyn's Gala will have many other delights equally as intriguing as the appearance of this famous dancer. For instance Fonteyn herself will appear in *Le Spectre de la Rose* for the first time with John Gilpin, and Madame Karsavina has agreed to rehearse them. Then four stars of Poland's National Ballet (Maria Krzyszkowska, Alicja Boniuszko, Henryk Giero and Zygmunt Jasman) will fly over specially to dance in extracts from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Miraculous Mandarin.*

France is to be represented by Claire Sombert and Gerard Ohn in a *pas de deux* new to London, while Denmark sends a group of young dancers, led by Solveig Oestergaard and Niels Kehlet, who have risen from the ranks since the Royal Danish Ballet was last in London. They are to appear in excerpts from *Napoli, Flower Festival in Genzano* and *The Little Mermaid.* This year the programme is to be directed by Robert Helpmann and the Pro Arte orchestra conducted by John Lanchbery. Front of house star this year will be Princess Marina. All of which should amount to as lively an afternoon as this winter is likely to produce.

Markova's new role

EVEN if Alicia Markova's stage appearances have of late been confined to Fokine's *The Dying Swan,* and this she has been giving weekly with London's Festival Ballet during their provincial and foreign tours, she is extending her activity in other fields. She appears at premières looking wonderful, makes continual appearances on television and talks on sound radio as well as having her own record programme when she seems to be the most super disc jockey.

Her new venture though is concerned more with opera than ballet, for she is going into a triple rôle in the production of Gluck's *Orfeo* at New York's Metropolitan Opera House — as ballerina, choreographer and stage director. In this triple capacity we wish her every success.

Vivid, romantic, surprising . . .

BY no means the least surprising thing about "vivid Margot Fonteyn" is the way this autumn she quietly jumped into the position of being probably the highest paid writer on ballet anywhere in the world today. Any author who can have serials running simultaneously in *Woman* and the *Sunday Pictorial* isn't doing badly.

Of course Dame Margot was quite right to point out how ballet critics put people off going to ballet, and I hope we are all truly grateful for the example she has set in the right way to describe a dancer's life and work in a dignified way without all the irrelevant discussion of personal affairs which no dancer — least of all an ambassador's wife — would ever want.

What I admire above all, however, is the way Dame Margot has managed to hit exactly the right literary style for each of the journals concerned. As the unaided achievement of one with little practice in writing for publication, this is really most impressive.

Better late

EARLIER this year I pointed out that the Royal Ballet had now reached the stage of not celebrating the various landmarks in its history as it reached them. The Vic-Wells Association, that band of stalwarts who have done so much for the company in different ways, were determined not to leave the company's thirtieth birthday unhonoured, so they organised a belated reception at the Victory Ex-Services Club on September 10.

Although some of the guests announced elsewhere as having been present did not in fact turn up, there were quite enough past members of the company at the party for all who wanted to play the game of spotting once familiar faces.

The guest of honour was, of course, Dame Ninette de Valois, who made a speech combining aptness with commendable brevity and then set out to visit every table in turn. A very characteristic action this from one who would doubtless have preferred to sit comfortably at her own table, yet thought of others first, thanking them for coming when thanks were really due to her for making it all possible.

Dancing with a purpose

SINCE the first tentative experiments in ballet exercises for athletes, several well-known jumpers and others have testified to the value of regular ballet training. A recent demonstration in London showed some of the progress that has been made.

One purpose was to publicise the book of *Ballet Exercises for Athletes* which has been prepared to spread the message more widely. Devised by Andrew Hardie, illustrated by the cartoonist Fougasse and put out by the Royal Academy of Dancing, this sells at only half a crown and will enable any athlete to give himself a workout based on a ballet class.

The meeting also served the not unuseful purpose of plugging the idea of ballet as a manly activity to the general public. If footballers are taking up ballet, then why not ballet dancers taking up football? A ballet cup final at Wembley with the Covent Garden Spurs versus the Festival Hall Rovers (with Marie Rambert as referee and Walter Gore and Elizabeth West as linesmen) would possibly get a greater new public into either building than any other thing I can dream up.

Luxury all over

MY spy tells me that the Covent Garden gallery-goers no longer feel neglected. When the new carpet was put in the foyers and passageways downstairs, there must have been a little piece left over because the space at the back of the gallery is now carpeted. Not the steps, mark you, nor the

bar, but at least they have *one* carpet. Moreover, they have a quite wonderful view of those sumptuous new curtains.

In fact, the view of the Opera House's new curtains from some of the side seats is so good, and so prominent (the new pelmets being lower than the old) that some coarse and ungrateful creatures have complained that it stops them from seeing the stage!

Some people just never appreciate improvements. And after all the number of seats at lower than amphitheatre level, where you have an unencumbered view of the stage, is comparatively small. At least they can *see* the curtains.

Honeymoon visitors

CONGRATULATIONS to Luis Perez Davila (better known as Luisillo) on his marriage to Senorita Garcia (better known as Maria Vivo). Their wedding took place in Johannesburg during the company's highly successful South African tour. On their way back to Spain the newly-weds passed through Britain.

It seemed especially hard luck that on the very same day someone should happen to swim the channel both ways. So Luisillo and his bride had their pictures in the London evening papers and right opposite was a big headline blazoning forth the one name Luisillo would perhaps least have wanted to steal the publicity on this, of all occasions — a swimmer unfortunately called "Antonio".

Double blessing

CONGRATULATIONS twice to ballet historian Ivor Guest. First on his engagement to Anne Hutchinson (they are to marry in the Spring). Secondly because by forcing his bride to live in this country he brings here one of the most prominent of dance notators.

Although far too little has been done in this country in the way of dance notation, things are improving. A few dancers have shown interest, notably Harry Haythorne, who was ballet-master to Massine's company and now fulfils the same function for Walter Gore's London Ballet. The Royal Ballet also now employs a notator, and she, Faith Worth, is going with Kenneth MacMillan to Denmark to notate the three works he is mounting for the Royal Danish Ballet.

However, with the future Mrs. Ivor Guest's arrival in this country, things will be stirred up very considerably.

A double blessing came also, in the late summer, to two ex-members of the Royal Ballet with the birth of identical twin boys to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Higgins. Mrs. Higgins (Valerie Reece) used to be a soloist for many years with the Royal Ballet's touring company and he was for some years that company's manager.

happy birthday to...

		November
George Salavisa	De Cuevas International Ballet	13
Jean-Pierre Alban	London's Festival Ballet	14
David Boswell	The Royal Ballet	22
Peter Heubi	De Cuevas International Ballet	24
Bryan Ashbrige	The Royal Ballet	25
Jocelyn Vollmar	San Francisco Ballet	25
Peter Wright	Ballet-master in Stuttgart	25
Patricia Cox	Borovansky Ballet	26
Nicholas Magallanes	New York City Ballet	27
Philippe Perrottet	Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet	29
Doreen Draisey	Ballet Rambert	30
		December
Alicia Markova		1
Kenneth Barlow	The Royal Ballet	1
Shirley Dixon	Ballet Rambert	1
Philip Chatfield	In New Zealand	2
Harold Turner	Royal Ballet Organisation	2
Zdravko Bayer	De Cuevas International Ballet	4
Jimmy Urbain	De Cuevas International Ballet	6
Lupe Serrano	American Ballet Theatre	7
Grant Strate	Canadian National Ballet	7
Estella Nova	London's Festival Ballet	9
Miro Zolan	The Opera, Teheran	10
Joan Blakeney	The Royal Ballet	11
Kenneth MacMillan	Royal Ballet choreographer	11
Gayrie MacSween	Ballet Rambert	12
Shirley Cash	Canadian National Ballet	13
Jeremy Sutcliffe	London's Festival Ballet	14
Gillian Shane	London's Festival Ballet	14
Nicolas Polajenko	De Cuevas International Ballet	15
Anna Truscott	Ballet Rambert	17
Annette Page	The Royal Ballet	18
Beatrice Consuelo	De Cuevas International Ballet	23
Alan Carter	In Germany	24
David Lichine	Teaching in America	25

BALLERINA RIVALRY FOR FILM: Jack Carter, the choreographer, between Olga Ferri (Fanny Elssler) and Rosella Hightower (Taglioni) during the making of a Belgian-German film on the life of Fanny Elssler now being made. The film, designed by Norman McDowell, includes excerpts from La Sylphide; Natalie, ou la Latiére Suisse; La Fille du Danube; La Jolie Fille de Gand *and* Le Diable Boiteaux *for which Cyril Beaumont discovered the original scores.*

Dancer You Will Know

MONICA MASON

BORN in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September, 1941. Started to dance at the age of four. Studied with Ruth Inglestone in Johannesburg from 1950 to 1955. Moved to England with her family in July, 1956, and studied with Nesta Brooking for a year. Joined the Royal Ballet School in 1957 and became a member of the company in 1958. Appointed soloist in the autumn of 1961.

Creations: Friend in La Fille Mal Gardée; Ensemble *in* Diversions; *(for Sunday Ballet Club) Fortune Teller in* Sleight of Hand. *Rôles: Moyna in* Giselle; *Leading Swan,* Pas de Six *and Spanish Dance in* Swan Lake; *Woodland Glades Fairy and Florestan* Pas de Trois *in* The Sleeping Beauty; *Gypsy in* Petrushka; *Pulcinello in* Ondine; *Red Girl in* Les Patineurs.

EVEN in a day when so many girls of the current crop entering the Royal Ballet have a strong technique, Monica Mason is perhaps even stronger than most. She has an outstanding jump, and this was one of the first things that one noticed about her when she was dancing among the flour-faced Pulcinellos in the *commedia dell'arte divertissement* of *Ondine*. Here was leaping with something of the same freedom and forcefulness that we associate with the Russians.

Her qualities as a pure dancer have been admirably demonstrated by her appearances in the testing *ensemble* work of Macmillan's *Diversions,* and also as Moyna in *Giselle*. She has also shown one or two hints of dramatic flair, a certain touch of stage presence that makes her immediately attract attention in the *corps de ballet,* like Clive Molloy among the boys. This dramatic quality also emerged when she appeared in Clover Roope's ballet, *Sleight of Hand,* for the Sunday Ballet Club. Her direct, yet under-stated, portrayal of the quietly venomous Fortune Teller in this ballet suggested that she could one day become a useful instrument for modern choreographers.

Professor Isaacs and the Ballet

On the B.B.C. Home Service, on September 27, a talk was given — The Ballet and the Critics — **by Jacob Isaacs, Professor of English Language at London University. PETER JAY listened to this talk and here is his opinion :**

SOME weeks ago a review of Jerome Robbins' *Ballets U.S.A.* in that stronghold of the Higher Criticism, *Punch,* included the remark that most intelligent people do not go to ballet, and I found this statement, containing as it does some element of truth, rather disturbing. It is not so much that intelligent people do not go to ballet, but that far too many people, some of them intelligent enough to know better, think of ballet as nothing more than a collection of nubile young women in long white skirts hopping around on their toes to the accompaniment of tuneful music.

When, therefore, I saw in the *Radio Times* that Jacob Issacs, Professor of English Language and Literature at Queen Mary College, London University, was giving a talk on the Home Service on Wednesday, 27 September, entitled "The Ballet and the Critics', I was greatly encouraged. Here was a professor who must surely be intelligent, who goes to ballet, and, best of all, is ready to have a go at the Critics. I regret to say that his talk did not fulfil my expectations. Firstly, it was very difficult to tell precisely what he wanted the critics to do. He quoted Haskell to the effect that dancers are too often interested in steps at the expense of interpretation, and then devoted most of the rest of his talk to a discussion of steps.

He quoted Karsavina on the function of the Achilles tendon, and sneered at those who spoke of Soloviev as "an astronaut moving in orbit", but in another passage called for descriptions of the performance along the same lines as the descriptions by Lamb, Hazlitt or Leigh Hunt, quoting a passage from Hazlitt of an anti-technical kind. It is always possible that a rhapsody on Soloviev's Achilles tendon would perpetuate the performance for some people more effectively than a description in terms of space travel, but I think that the general public would find the latter more evocative.

Worse than this, Professor Isaacs is a purveyor of superlatives : "Mr. Edwin Denby is the best ballet critic now writing in English." "Theophile Gautier was a greater ballet critic even than his reputation implies." "I am convinced that the Kirov company is the best in the world." As Professor Isaacs says nothing of the standards by which he determines their quality, I find that these statements tell us something about him but little about Denby, Gautier and the Kirov. But this is not all, he wants the critics to confirm him in such opinions.

At this point I am afraid I tremble for the wretched students of English Language and Literature at Queen Mary College. Are they being taught that a critic is good merely because he flatters one's prejudices ? Are they also being taught to criticise by labelling ? Professor Isaacs wants to be told why *The Green Table* is not ballet and why *Carmen* is very nearly ballet. There are many critics who will tell him that the latter is a bad ballet but why should they be so silly as to say that it is "very nearly ballet". I must confess with shame that I have not seen the Jooss company, but it has always been described as a ballet company and I can think of no grounds upon which Professor Isaacs could deny it the title. It was not a classical ballet company but that is quite another matter.

As for the Kirov, all that a critic can do is to say why it is one of the great companies of the world. Why Professor Isaacs thinks it to be *the best* is a problem for his psychologist, who would probably tell him that at his age (he was born in 1896) and with his background (he saw Pavlova and so forth) he is predisposed to be sympathetic towards the Kirov's approach to ballet and less so to those of the Bolshoi, Robbins and Balanchine.

If I may usurp the function of Professor Isaacs' psychologist, I think there is another and deeper reason for his preference : in the course of his talk I heard much to convince me that he likes to watch dancers, but very little to suggest that he is a lover of ballet as an expressive art form. The one serious mention of choreography was to distinguish between "pantomime" and "pure" or "abstract" ballet, the latter two appearing to mean the same thing. Professor Isaacs was rather hard to follow at this point, but seems to regard classical ballet as an example of the "abstract" type and *N.Y. Export, Op. Jazz* as "pantomime". Nobody who gets his categories as confused as this can be called a serious commentator.

Like so many people, Professor Isaacs brings a resolute naïveté to Covent Garden. We are told that during the Kirov season he was able to watch Sergeyev rehearsing a group of principal dancers, from a clandestine position in the flies, and that he learned more about ballet in that hour than he had of anything in the theatre except by watching Reinhardt rehearse.

This may well be true, but I doubt whether in that hour he can have learned very much. In the first place, the fly galleries at Covent Garden are over 30 feet above the stage. In the second place, I hardly think it likely that Sergeyev would wait until he got to London before explaining his views on the Meaning of Art and similar weighty matters to his principal dancers at the top of his voice. He would surely be saying that such and such an *enchaînement* was a little too fast, that some partnering needed working up, that more emphasis on one passage and less on another would help to clarify the interpretation, and so on. A spectator who can speak fluent Russian, as we must presume Professor Isaacs can, might be able to learn something under these conditions, but when Professor Isaacs speaks of the experience in such glowing terms, I fear that he must be surrendering to his sense of occasion.

Incidentally, when he says that Semenov was one of the dancers present, must he not mean Chernishev ?

I find all this very sad. There are so many elderly gentlemen who think they love the ballet and will reminisce about Pavlova or Diaghilev and the palmy days when they were young. One's natural wish is to be tolerant of their memories because, with luck, we may all survive to be elderly in our turn. However, when these elderly gentlemen show themselves so insensitive to the present, one's sympathies are chilled. Professor Isaacs' talk was all of *arabesques* and *attitudes* and landings like feathers, with a passing reference to the muscles of the back and the pelvis and how all this should be done, but never a word as to *why* it should be done.

I am afraid that Professor Isaacs may be one of those people I mentioned earlier, who are intelligent enough to know better, but think of ballet as nothing more than a collection of nubile young women in long white skirts hopping around on their toes to the accompaniment of tuneful music. Certainly he is very conscious of this aspect of the art. We are told that the dirty old men with their binoculars at the Paris Opéra in the front row of the stalls are "right". This seems an oddly chosen word. Does he mean that they do receive the vicarious gratification they seek ? I should have thought that only one of themselves could offer an opinion on this point. Does he mean they show a true appreciation of the Art of Ballet ? possibly, although I hope not. He also tells us with approval that Thackeray went to the theatre to see "Legs", after which his assertion that "Classical Ballet is art, which even according to Freud is sex, but sublimated sex" falls oddly on the ear as I cannot see where the sublimation comes in.

Leaving sex reluctantly on one side, it appears from Professor Isaacs' talk that he values the Kirov solely in its aspect of the True Guardian of the Maryinsky Tradition. One must agree that this is indeed a wonderful tradition and after due passage of years I shall doubtless irritate younger ballet-goers with the oft repeated story of the first night in London of the Kirov's *Sleeping Beauty* — but what did Professor Isaacs think about the excerpt from *Taras Bulba,* what does he think about Balanchine, about *Danses Concertantes, Les Deux Pigeons* and *La Fille Mal Gardée* ? In fact we know what he thinks about the Royal Ballet — it is "something approaching a national ballet", and about Dame Margot Fonteyn — "a ballerina . . . of quite high calibre". This is snobbery, and the Russians themselves know better.

I should be sorry if anyone were to think that in attacking Professor Isaacs I am defending the critics. What was written about the Kirov under the guise of criticism was, for the most part, pretty sorry stuff, and far too much of it seemed to be trying to prove that the Royal Ballet, rather than the Kirov, is the True Guardian of the Maryinsky Tradition. I do not think that it is the critics' function to recreate the performance for the benefit of those who did not see it, and to perpetuate it for those who did. I do not even think that this is possible. A literary artist can sometimes write well enough to make one think that he has done it, but insofar as he is an artist, he is neither recreating nor perpetuating the art of the performer, he is creating something altogether new of his own. Every journalist now feels that he must, in two or three hundred words, catch the spirit of a great artist. I know of no critic writing today who has the talent but many, who in trying to do this, fail even to report accurately what they saw.

I think that accurate observation and informed comment are the real functions of the critic within the present-day limitations of space and time. There are no more than two or three critics who can fill even this humble rôle, and if the others are to be attacked, I think that it should be on these grounds. Professor Isaacs, by setting them an impossible task, and omitting to point out their real failure, has done no service to the art which he claims to love.

Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

at the Royal Festival Hall

Guests and Galas

THE penultimate week of Festival Ballet's very successful season at Festival Hall was intended to be given over to international guests and the annual birthday gala. Unfortunately owing to the knee injury sustained by that delightful Hungarian ballerina, Zsuzsa Kun, the planning of the week went cockeyed. In the end it was really Josette Amiel and Flemming Flindt who were the principal outside guests.

Amiel and Flindt were seen, during the week, in *Giselle* Act 2, the Bourmeister *Swan Lake* Act 2, and the Bournonville *Flower Festival in Genzano pas de deux* Amiel was a very great disappointment in *Giselle* which she gave with none of the qualities we expect from one with the title of "ballerina", nor was her Odette much better in spite of the reports from France that she was the best of the Paris Opéra dancers to play this dual rôle in the full-length work which Bourmeister mounted for them. However, she made amends by her charming performance in the Bournonville *pas de deux*, thus being the only contemporary French ballerina to understand what was originally her native school. Her dancing throughout this had grace, polish and understanding of what was required.

Usually in stage partnerships it is the man who sets off the ballerina, in this case the tables were turned and Amiel set off Flindt who has developed into one of the great male dancers of our time. Whether his tour at the Opéra has been responsible for this polishing or whether it is merely the natural maturing of his native Danish schooling I would not know. As Flindt has had little chance to shine at the Opéra, I can only imagine it must be his background Anyway, that rather bounding, brash though charming personality has fined down to a dancer who presents a most noble bearing on the stage and what is more, he is starting to "live" his rôles. I could believe in his Albrecht and for the first time since Bourmeister mounted his *Swan Lake* Act 2 for Festival Ballet I started to understand what was intended for Prince Siegfried. He partners and uses the stage like a Russian, he dances and acts like a Dane which is about the most thoroughbred cross-breeding I can think of. Despite a very splendid variation in *Giselle* it was not until he danced the Bournonville *pas de deux* that it was possible to see just how much his dancing has improved. Here are several *soli* which run the gamut of the male dancing vocabulary and what is more, everything has to be danced to each side. Here, perfection of line, immaculate and precise finish to everything are essential — nothing else is acceptable. What Flindt now shows is a text-book of elevation, beats, turns and perfect placement. Together with Soloviev, he has provided the highlight of male dancing seen in England during 1961, that is up to the time of writing (we still have Bruhn and Nureyev to see before the final laurels can be handed out).

This performance of *Flower Festival in Genzano* was also most decidedly the highest spot in Festival Ballet's Twelfth Birthday Gala, on September 7, which turned out to be the kind of lucky dip that every "Gala" seems to be and with more dip than luck. I don't know why it is that these occasions turn into a series of party pieces that dancers would never dare to do under other circumstances, but this is how they always are (yes, even that much vaunted Kirov "Gala Programme" for at least two-thirds of its length): Ballet's final epitaph will read: "Died slowly and painfully during a Gala".

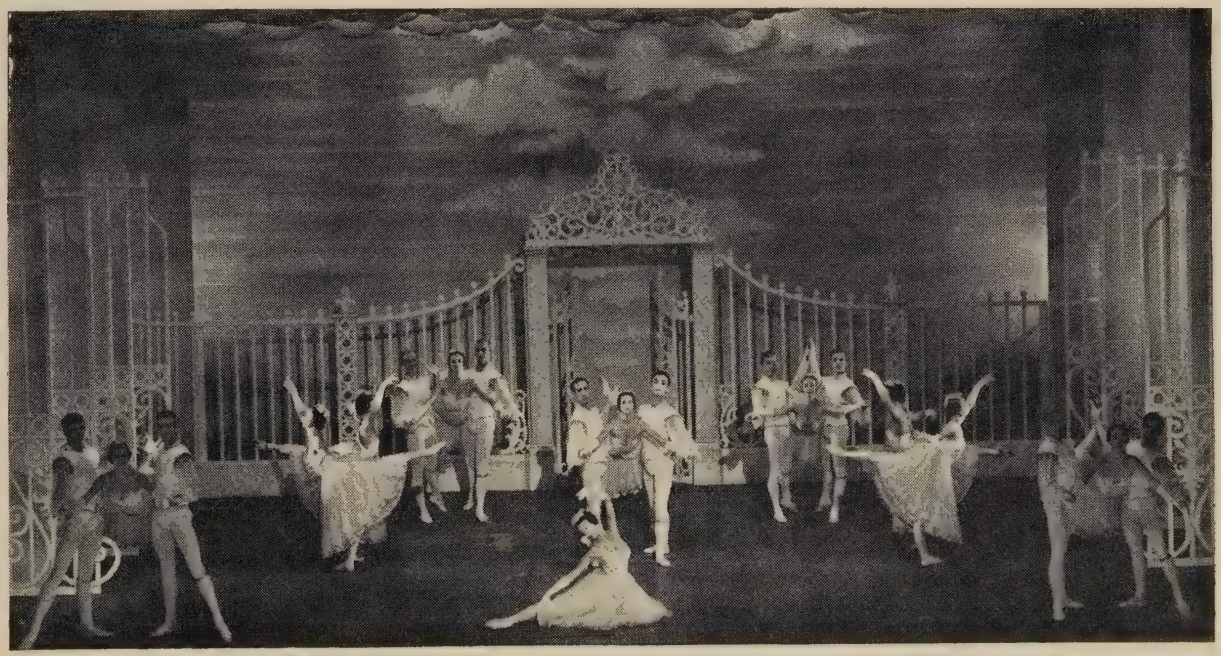
Whether Festival's 1961 "offering" was any worse than usual I don't know but it seemed a long-drawn out agony. It started all right though with a non-party piece — Fokine's *Les Sylphides*. There was much more Fokine than is usual these days in the excellent work of the *corps de ballet*, in Gaye Fulton's *Prélude* and David Adam's *Mazurka*. Belinda Wright was not very musical in her *Mazurka* though she made good this defection in the *C Minor Waltz* with Adams later.

Well, that was a good start and, best things first, the memorable events during the rest of the evening were the aforesaid *Festival in Genzano*, John Auld as a zany and plausible Headmistress in *Graduation Ball* and a very good "Sylphide and Scotsman" by Gaye Fulton and Jean-Pierre Alban in the same ballet, in fact one of the best performances of this *pas de deux* that I have seen.

On the discredit side came the *Don Quixote pas de deux* with Burr and Briansky giving a performance of such affectation as I never hope to see again from two stars (very different to what I saw them give so well in Italy earlier in the year). Then a slashed and slaughtered Greig *Concerto* well danced as it was by Berowska and Maule. Briansky again but with Deirdre O'Conaire in his *Adagio* (Albinoni music and Yolanda Sonnabend costumes) which the programme informed us was "A woman obsessed with fear, senses a true refuge in her husband's compassion". The dance I saw never expressed this to me, and I think the husband's compassion must have been so effective a refuge that the point was also obscured from the audience. O'Conaire danced well though and Briansky was quieter than in his previous appearance.

Burr on again, and this time with Hungarian, Ferenc Havas, in a *Hungarian Ginsy Pas de Deux* which I think I may have seen last year or was it 40 years ago in *Maid of the Mountains* — and I hope science or the deity arranges things so that I never seen it again. To end the middle part of the programme, Alicia Markova crossed the stage, dressed as a swan, to Saint-Saens music. My deep love and respect for this truly great artist makes me wish I did not *always* have to see her these days in a solo that belongs to Pavlova and to Pavlova alone (every artist contemplating this, please note). Still, at least she brought the presence of Markova — and that is something. Now back to another year of the nightly grind and the usual repertory, happily.

P. W.



RENDEZVOUS REVIVED: Ashton's Les Rendezvous *has been revived for the Royal Ballet's present provincial tour and William Chappell's second lot of designs has also been restored. Performances of this tour will be reviewed next month. Photo: Houston Rogers.*

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BALLET RAMBERT at Wimbledon

"LOOK here upon this picture, and on this." The first was *Night Shadow*, romantic ballet by George Balanchine, as given by Ballet Rambert at Sadler's Wells on July 18. We were so glad to see this masterpiece in a British repertory at last that everyone struggled hard to find kind things to say about it, but the performance was such that one simply could not pretend not to be disappointed.

Then, two months later to the day, *Night Shadow* again at Wimbledon Theatre on September 18. The sense of relief was so great that I must be careful not to exaggerate. Of course the company ought to be larger to do the work full justice; of course they ought to appear on a bigger stage; and (above all) they ought to be accompanied by a far bigger and stronger orchestra.

And, equally of course, they can do none of these things because the money is not there. Nevertheless, *Night Shadow* now emerges as a viable production.

Part of the difference is simply a matter of more time and rehearsal. Then, although limited by the resources of a small repertory theatre, the lighting was better than at the Wells, where on some nights it was frankly disastrous.

More than anything else, however, the improvement came from a change in casting. Norman Morrice was on leave to study choreography in America; John Chesworth replaced him as the Poet, with consequent changes in two other rôles.

Now Chesworth is no Skibine, and Skibine has set a standard in this rôle which we are unlikely to see equalled. Chesworth is, however, a dancer-actor of some style, presence and authority, and his performance was already interesting. If he has the chance to develop it as he does most rôles, this should become one of his outstanding interpretations.

Kenneth Bannerman was entirely adequate, replacing Chesworth as the Baron, and looked a lot more at home than when he danced the Harlequin solo, which did not suit him. This, in turn, was taken over by Yannis Metsis, a far crisper dancer of more compact physique, who was able to bring out the grotesque nature of the choreography to better advantage.

The rest of the cast was as before, but the ballet as a whole made a far better impression. *Night Shadow* in Ballet Rambert's London season next year ought to be a very different thing from what it was last summer.

John Percival.

THE UKRAINIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY

IT was a pleasure to welcome back on a second visit to London the Ukrainian State Dance Company. These lively Cossacks opened a season of discreet rioting at the Albert Hall on September 19.

This huge company of pleasant peasants has been mechanised to notable effect by its artistic director and choreographer, Pavel Virsky. Not seen in Britain for three years, the troupe has developed a sort of instant-spontaneity. Flash on the old spotlights, and they dance with a carefree exuberance, that has been carefully calculated down to the last millimetre of theatrical vitality. The dancing is like a mass-produced bouquet of virtuosity, in which the men excel and the women are only left to do a few washing-up operations on the side.

The men spin, while the women gracefully toil. And how they spin. Each one of them seems to have his own gyrating party-piece, and just like one of those Victorian musical evenings of yesterday when Uncle Albert sang Tosti's "Goodbye", so, at the appropriate moment, Cousin Ivan here comes out and with a bashful, confident grin, produces, say, his own individual embroidery on the cobbler's step, that down-on-the-haunches, legs-thrown-out dance that has partly made the Ukraine what it is today.

There need be no cant about the glories of folk art. These Ukrainian dancers are in effect hardly any more of the people than classical dancers are of the French Court! They are thorough-going professionals, with about as much claim to amateur status as Jack Kramer's tennis circus, although they derive from national dancing, just as Kramer's hard-bitten volleyers derive from the gentlemanly playing-fields of Wimbledon. These Cossacks are dancing for their supper.

The programme given by this huge Cossack Ensemble came in two flavours, the coy and the brash. The coy, with its funny little scenes of village wooing, its rural maidens giving sidelong glances at the pasteurised-pure young men trying to chase them, its gay, waving handkerchiefs and ribbons, and its travel-brochure version of rustic jollity, all this may become tedious. Far from unpleasant in itself, like malted milk a little goes a long way. Of the brash — the impossible feats of derring-do done with a careful nonchalance as limbs leap upwards and knee-joints crash on floor — I can never have enough.

As soon as those red-booted, faceless dancers started interlacing their solos like a jazz-band jamming, bouncing out from the group and up, up into the air, my heart leapt with them. Pavel Virsky's choreography was admirable, possibly only the redoubtable Igor Moiseyev shows the same skill in deploying this maniac dancing. There was grace as well as abandon in his intertwining dance patterns, and sometimes even — here and there scattered like virtue — the gleam of character acting amidst all the enthusiastic character dancing. Why is it, though, that Ukrainian music only seems to have two tunes to it?

C. B.

Dance and Dancers . . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

ON July 24, Claire Motte scored a success when, partnered by Peter Van Dijk, she took over the rôle of the Nymph in Lifar's *Noces Fantastiques*, which was created on February 2, 1955, by Claude Bessy. This young dancer was in perfect accord with both the characterisation and the choreography — underlining the enigmatic and strange quality of the former and the fluid suppleness of the latter. While Bessy accentuated the seductive aspect of the Queen of the Waters, Claire Motte makes the most of her restless qualities. The costume, like the rôle, is more suited to her highly original style than are the filmy costumes and romantic graces which are to her detriment.

Jacqueline Rayet, in her turn, lent a beautiful assurance to her dancing in the *pas de trois* and Flute *variation* in *Suite en blanc*. Josette Amiel and Flemming Flindt appeared successively in *Les Sylphides* and *Giselle*, the closing performances of the season on July 28. Then on July 31, the company danced before the huge façade of the Théâtre Antique at Orange in *Lac des Cygnes* with Motte and Jean-Paul Andréani.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

FOLLOWING a spectacular escapade, Rudolf Nureyev was invited by the Marquise de Cuevas and Raymond Larrain to dance in one of the company's classics, which was well-known to him — *The Sleeping Beauty*. Following three days of frantic rehearsals — the two versions differing on more than one point — he made a triumphant début on July 23 opposite Nina Vyroubova, whose dancing of Aurora on that night will leave an unforgettable memory.

Each act marked the sensitive progression from a young girl to the creature of an imponderable dream and, finally, the Princess in the full glory of her femininity. Rarely has the accord and equilibrium been as harmonious between two partners. In fact, we were given the all too rare satisfaction of being able to appreciate, with the ballerina, a true artist able to excel equally well in a brilliant *variation*, a *pas de deux*, and to bring to the smallest gesture its true significance and sensitivity of expression: qualities absent, alas, in so many contemporary dancers. Knowing how much effort had gone into the hasty preparations, it is hard to understand why the management only united these two dancers twice in the season. Whatever the desires of a mediocre public, too often seeking the thrills of a circus or something of curiosity value, the accord of these two styles is something extremely rare. In subsequent performances, not even the remarkable technique of Rosella Hightower or the grace and prettiness of Liane Daydé could compensate us for not seeing Vryoubova and Nureyev again.

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IN September two De Cuevas stars, Nina Vyroubova and Rosella Hightower, opened studios in Nice and Cannes.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

IN Nice at the beginning of August, Lifar created a new work. *On ne badine pas avec l'amour*, after de Musset, with a score by Vittoria and Daydé, Motte, Vladimir Skouratoff and Alexandre Kalioujny as principal dancers. On his return from the Soviet Union, Lifar presided at the prize-giving ceremony of the Université de la Danse. The awards went to: Léonide Jakobsen (Leningrad), Nijinska, Kchessinska, Préobrajenska, Karsavina and

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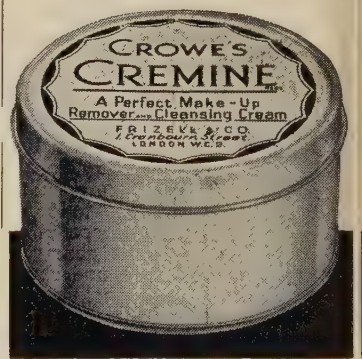

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ON July 16, the fourth choreographic festival at Brantôme, organised by Peter Van Dijk, took place. The programme consisted of two works : *Pas de trois* (Minkus) and *Isoline* (Messager) danced by Christiane Vaussard, Christiane Vlassy and Lucien Duthoit. Jacqueline Rayet and Van Dijk danced with much charm and emotion extracts from *Lac des Cygnes* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Prokofiev) before taking part in *Suite en blanc*. The simplicity, the taste, the evocation of old France in this tiny festival, singles it out from all those held annually throughout the country.

AT the Bayreuth Festival, Béjart has just staged the choreography for the Bacchanale in Wieland Wagner's production of *Tannhauser*. This unconventional *divertissement* was given a mixed reception, but enabled Béjart to develop one of the favourite themes of his inspiration.

ROLAND PETIT, who re-formed his company, is rehearsing with Jeanmaire for a season planned in November at the Théâtre de l'Alhambra. One of his scheduled works is *La Chaloupée*, with a scenario by Marcel Aymé and a score arranged from Offenbach by Maurice Thiriet.

MARCEL MARCEAU has been invited to tour the principal cities of the Soviet Union to coincide with the French Exhibition now taking place in Moscow.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

AMERICA

THE N.Y. CITY BALLET

THE New York City Ballet, which opened its three-week Autumn season on August 29, also opened on the crest of the most violent heatwave to strike the city in years. Interestingly enough, though there were no new creations, the not completely air-conditioned nor entirely comfortable New York City Center had one of the most successful seasons in its history, playing to capacity audiences, especially during its first two weeks. Double excitement was provided on both sides of the footlights when the entire Leningrad Kirov Ballet attended a series of the New York City Ballet's performances. While viewing our finest company of ballet dancers, the Leningrad Kirov Ballet were exposed to such a diversity of Balanchine works as this choreographer's latest masterwork, *Liebeslieder Walzer*, as well as such intensely modern creations as *Electronics, Episodes* Part II, *Agon, Ivesiana*, as well as noteworthy performances of *Apollo, The Prodigal Son* and such contemporary Americana as *Western Symphony* and *Stars and Stripes*. It would indeed be interesting to know what our distinguished visitors thought of these disparate works by our greatest classical choreographer in America who also stemmed directly from the glorious Maryinsky tradition. What we do know, however, is that the New York City Ballet provided one of the most exciting seasons in its history. What's more, and perhaps even more important, is that those of us who were fortunate enough to view Balanchine's ballets and dancers alternately with those of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet were made doubly aware (as if it were really necessary by now) of George Balanchine's gigantic contributions to twentieth century ballet, particularly in America, and especially in an approach that is excitingly musical and physically suited to the dynamics of American bodies moving in space in a revolutionary manner.

Obviously capping the climax of the New York City Ballet's season was Balanchine's evocative and beautiful *Liebeslieder Walzer*, easily one of the finest ballets produced in America in recent years. In addition, there was the very promising debut of young Conrad Ludlow in *Apollo* and a magnificent portrayal of *The Prodigal Son* with Edward Villella in the title rôle. Save for the absence of Melissa Hayden, who was out of the company this season to await the birth of her second child, the principal dancers were, as heretofore, Diana Adams, Todd Bolender, Jacques d'Amboise, Jillana, Allegra Kent, Michael Lland, Conrad Ludlow, Patricia McBride, Nicholas Magallanes, Francisco Moncion, Violette Verdy, Edward Villella, Jonathan Watts and Patricia Wilde. At the risk of appearing chauvinistic, it is nevertheless necessary to add that the presence of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet in our midst, which has indeed been a momentous experience, has also given a new perspective for many of us to the enormous contributions George Balanchine has made to the American dance scene. And, since the New York City Ballet is now at the peak of perfection in its career, it seems unfortunate, to say the least, that the rest of the world is not seeing them at present.

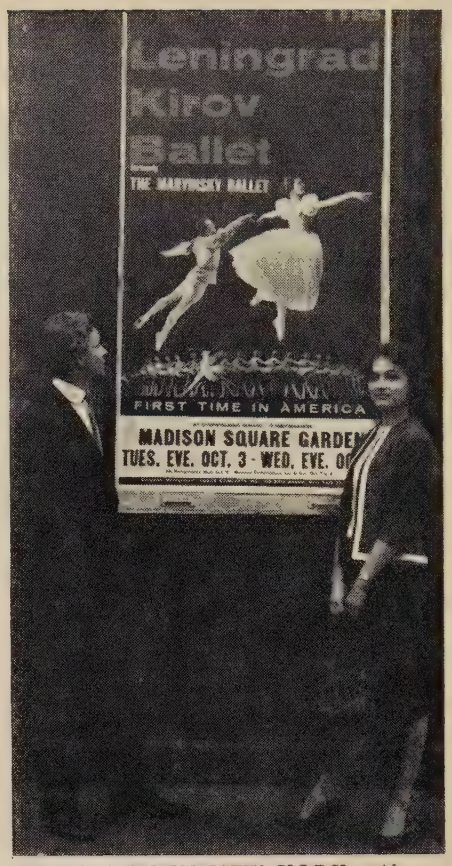
THE KIROV IN NEW YORK

THE long-awaited première of the Leningrad Kirov Company took place at the Metropolitan Opera House on the steamingly hot and humid evening of September 11 in the presence of a distinguished, though perspiring, audience. Out-of-doors the temperature was a humid 93 degrees, but inside the crowded house the heat was an estimated 103 degrees. Previously, some 82 ballet enthusiasts had lined up as long as thirty-three and a half hours ahead to buy the much-coveted standing room positions for Opening Night. Among the notables on hand to welcome this remarkable company were Martha Graham, Alexandra Danilova, Vera Zorina, Van Cliburn, Norman Morrice and Mikhail A. Menshikov, the Soviet Ambassador to the United States. The entire New York City Ballet was also invited as guests of Konstantin Sergeyev, Artistic Director of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet. Afterwards, impresario S. Hurok was host to the Russian company and an assemblage of guests at a post-performance party held on the roof of the Hotel St. Regis.

Swan Lake

FROM their own artistic point of view it was both logical and valid for the Leningrad Kirov Ballet to start their American tour with their production of the four-act *Swan Lake*, a masterpiece first premièred at the Maryinsky Theatre 66 years ago. However, as was proven the case when the Royal Ballet once opened one of their New York seasons with *Le Lac des Cygnes*, it is not a ballet that is the most propitious choice for a première. However, be that as it may, it was still a notable evening. It was immediately apparent that Konstantin Sergeyev's revisions placed the main emphasis on dancing and both the dramatic and theatrical aspects of this production as we have known it heretofore were minimised to the point that that they were almost non-existent.

Everywhere the emphasis was on dance



THE KIROV IN NEW YORK : Above, Yuri Soloviev and Alla Sizova stand outside the Metropolitan Opera House and survey the poster announcing their extended engagement in Madison Square Garden. Photo : Arthur Todd.

for the sake of dance alone, and in this aspect the company is one of the treasures of the world. From the first viewing onwards of their other works, it is obvious that pure dance — quiet, controlled, elegant and aristocratic — is the hallmark of this company. Ignoring what might be termed the bravura and pyro-technical virtuosity of their predecessors here, the Bolshoi Ballet, the Leningrad Kirov Company's initial impact on American audiences was less than its best, as the season went on to prove, just as held true in London and Paris.

Inna Zubkovskaya, in the double rôle of Odette-Odile, suffering from the extreme heat, performed gallantly and valiantly, but it was not until later in the season that her remarkable qualities as a dynamic dancer began to come through. Vladilen Semenov, who does double air turns of remarkable beauty and control, also made his Prince Siegfried a notable and praiseworthy partner. Interestingly enough, it was the *Pas de Trois* in the First Act, as danced by Alla Sizova, Natalia Makarova and Yuri Soloviev, that literally stopped the performance and had the audience roaring its approval. All of the advance praise that had been heaped upon Alla Sizova proved to be richly deserved and, as the season progressed, she rapidly became the darling of the press and of the public. Alexandre Pavlovsky made a dynamic Jester and I must say that I have never appreciated nor enjoyed the dance of the four Cygnets more than it was performed by Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Marina Vasilieva, Tamara Ishakova and Galina Kekisheva. Nor have I ever seen the dance of the prospective

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Brides for the Prince performed with such innate grace and lyricism. This same grace, ease and superb musicality seemed likewise to be the outstanding characteristic of the *corps,* one of the most disciplined and beautiful that we have ever seen in America. Their style was meticulous, their phrasing superb. I must add that Simon Virsaladze's settings were attractive and Eugene Duboskoi's conducting spirited despite his slowing of much of the *tempi.* If the Bolshoi Ballet's greater glamour and fire found more immediate recognition in America, it must be added that the Leningrad Kirov Ballet's first and foremost appeal is in the purity of its dance, its line, its phrasing and its magnificent musicality. The more one knows about dance, the greater the rewards are in viewing this aggregation of remarkable artists. In truth, they are perhaps more a dancer's dance company than that of many of our other distinguished visiting companies from abroad, but, after all, isn't that the first function of any dance group?

According to reports, the second night's performance of *Swan Lake* found the company more at home and relaxed, though the heat was more oppressive than ever. Kaleria Fedicheva was found to be more exciting in the leading rôle and she was given admirable assistance by the striking and virile Sergei Vikulov.

Giselle

THE Leningrad Kirov's tender, romantic and predominantly musical production had a considerably greater success than did their *Swan Lake.* In this production, as in all their full-length works, the ballet is treated more as a work for the company as an entirety than as a vehicle for a star. However, although both Irina Kolpakova and Natalia Makarova each danced it beautifully in their own distinctive approaches, it was the *corps,* especially in Act II, that was utterly marvellous. As a matter of fact, I don't ever recall such overall perfection from any *corps de ballet* in memory. On the other hand, I do feel that the rôle of Giselle is one of the greatest rôles in classical ballet for the ballerina and it offers dramatic challenges that cannot be replaced entirely with superb dancing. While I have the greatest admiration for both Makarova's and Kolpakova's dancing of the rôle, I missed what I consider the essence of Giselle herself. Though this is perhaps a minority view, I do expect to be touched and deeply moved by this ballet, and in this production I was not. I have nothing but praise, however, for the physical production, its dancing style and its enormous respect for the music.

The Sleeping Beauty

THOUGH markedly different from other much-loved productions of *The Sleeping Beauty* in America, the Leningrad Kirov Ballet had the greatest success of any of their full-length works with their version. Alla Sizova scored a major triumph in the rôle of Princess Aurora in her debut which, by a happy coincidence, also happened to be her twenty-first birthday. As John Martin, of *The New York Times,* hailed her the next day: "If Alla Sizova of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet would like to have the City of New York, all she has to do is ask for it. It was all but handed across the footlights to her. . . ." This was the dazzling Sizova's third performance of the rôle (her début and second performance took place in London), and when she came to her fourth performance in New York the following week she had the audience roaring, stamping and screaming its approval. She was given admirable support by Yuri Soloviev, and in the Vision Scene both danced and played with a dramatic urgency that was youthfully romantic and markedly effective. Certainly there is less pantomime in this production than others of note, but here, again, the major emphasis was on the dancing. I must add that I missed what I feel is a necessarily dramatic balance of Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy playing against each other in contrast, for these two rôles, it seems to me, are at the dramatic crux of the work. Carabosse, as we have seen it played heretofore, can also have wit as well as villainy, and the Lilac Fairy may also be expected to have a personal beneficence that floats over the entire production. Again, I must add, this is purely a personal feeling about the ballet as a whole, and I must admit that Inna Zubkovskaya's Lilac Fairy and Konstantin Shatilov's Carabosse were quite in keeping with Sergeyev's overall approach to this ballet. The fairy variations were danced magnificently by Natalia Makarova, Nonna Yastrebova, Ninel Kurgapkina, Galina Kekisheva, Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Inna Korneyeva and Gabriela Komleva. This is casting that would indeed be difficult to top. Natalia Makarova and Sergei Vikulov were the aerial Bluebirds and Galina Kekisheva made an enchanting White Cat. Closing Night, Irina Kolpakova and Vladilen Semenov danced Aurora and Prince Desiré, giving us our first opportunity to see Sizova and Soloviev as the Bluebirds, and what an experience they made of it!

Highlights Programme 1 and 2

IT was not until the fourth night of its engagement, in its so-called Highlights Programme No. 1, that the Leningrad Kirov Ballet swept New Yorkers off their feet with the superb dancing of Alla Sizova and Yuri Soloviev in Petipa's enchanting, and heretofore unfamiliar to us, *pas de deux* from *The Corsair.* Sizova, who can possess a stage and audience with her personal magic even when she is *en attitude* before commencing to dance, has all the makings of a prima ballerina of world rank. She has enormous personal beauty and charm, a technique so dazzling that it evoked cheers even before the conclusion of her variations, and an innate musicality that can only be born, not bred. Her young and handsome partner, Yuri Soloviev, apparently is more at home in the air than on the ground. Together, these two superb dancers made an enchanting stage pair that drew the greatest roars of approval from the audience during the entire season. Both

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have the blessed simplicity of dancing only for the sheer joy of it. By all odds, Soloviev and Sizova proved to be the most exciting of the younger dancers of the company, just as did Ekaterina Maximova and Vladimir Vasiliev when they were here with the Bolshoi Ballet.

The first Highlights programme was also notable for a magnificently danced version of the Kingdom of the Shades scene from Petipa's *Bayaderka*. The *corps* of thirty-two girls, each of whom made a separate entrance, were utterly ravishing in their simplicity, unity and flowing musicality. Though Kaleria Fedicheva, Sergei Vikulov, Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Ninel Kurgapkina and Gabriela Komleva were the principals, and gave glowing performances indeed, it was the *corps* who quite literally danced off with the honours of this lovely choreography. Irina Kolpakova was an enchanting Sugar Plum Fairy in excerpts from *The Nutcracker* that were considerably revised, and not always to the best advantage, from other versions with which we are more familiar. Irina Gensler, who dances with fire and passion, made her best showing of the season in the excerpts from *Gayane,* and Emma Menchenok and Vsevolod Ukhov performed the rather dated *pas de deux, The Hunter and the Bird,* to music by Edward Grieg and choreography by Leonid Jakobson, with such artistic sincerity that they almost made us believe every moment of it. *The Gossips,* a charming, short interval, also choreographed by Jakobson, seemed more of the genre of the Moiseyev group than this purely classical company. As might be expected, the wildly exciting and magnificently danced *Taras Bulba,* as performed by the males, was a sensation, though it did not get a forty-five-minute ovation as it was reported to have received in London.

CHOPINIANA, as this company terms Fokine's *Les Sylphides,* as revived by Agrippina Vaganova, was the major delight of the Leningrad Kirov's second bill of assorted ballets. Having seen Fokine's own version of this historic work as he personally restaged it for Ballet Theatre in 1939, I can only add that the Leningrad Kirov's version is the most glorious in memory of this or any other company. In this version it is immediately apparent in the free and flowing arm movements the undeniable influence Isadora Duncan's dancing made on Fokine, and, as danced by soloists and *ensemble,* this glorious Fokine ballet took on a fresh meaning, poignancy, musicality and sheer beauty of movement that were a revelation. The *Nocturne* was danced by Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Irina Kolpakova and Anatoli Nisnievich, the *Waltz* was by Ludmilla Alexeyeva, the *Mazurka* by Anatoli Nisnievich, the *Mazurka* by Irina Kolpakova, the *Prelude* by Natalia Makarova and the *Waltz* by Irina Kolpakova. The entire performance was ravishing and one that shows to the peak the superb dance qualities of this company.

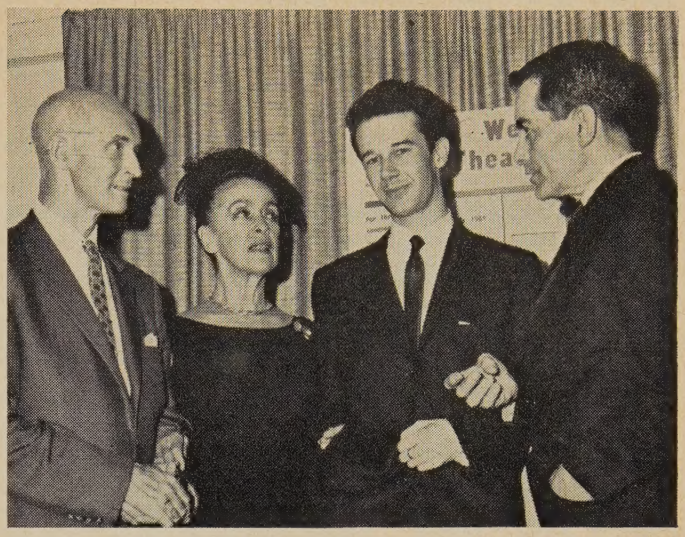
Igor Belsky's *Shostakovich Seventh Symphony* had its world première at the Kirov Theatre only last April. As its programme note reads, "The ballet is divided into three sections : 'Serene Happiness', 'Invasion' and 'Requiem'. The first episode, 'Serene Happiness,' begins against a white backdrop on which the opening bars of the Shostakovich Seventh Symphony are seen. Young men are at play: they are joined by the girls. The drop is replaced by another in which a few bold strokes convey the city of Leningrad: the River Neva, Admiralty Square, the iron railings of the summer gardens. The peaceful scene is broken into by brown-shorted figures. 'Invasion.' Columns of barbarians pour on the stage. The young men hurl themselves into the ranks of the enemy. They perish, for victory is distant, but they are heralds of a future triumph. The third part, 'Requiem,' follows without a break. Its solemn grief is imbued with a motif of hope."

Alla Sizova was the soloist of the Young Girls and Yuri Soloviev that of the Young Boys and both they and the *corps* danced Belsky's interesting choreography in a notable fashion. Both the opening and closing sections of this work were outstanding. The "Serene Happiness" section was full of bouyancy and vitality and proved that Igor Belsky has a sure hand in the development and inter-relationships of both soloists as well as large groups. Again, his closing section had a simplicity of movement that was well choreographed. The centre section, perhaps because of the exciting insistance of its music, which could well stand alone, gave Belsky more trouble, and here he gave the figures of the invaders movement that was repetitious in the extreme. Too, he often had so much happening on the stage at one time that this section lacked a true focal point. This, however, is perhaps minor carping about a work that is praiseworthy for its forward-looking use of dancers in a non-classic idiom. It was superbly performed by Sizova and Soloviev and the *corps de ballet.* The drop curtains designed by Mikhail Gordon were fresh, creative and effective and the lighting was stunning.

In the shorter ballet excerpts I found much to admire in the simplicity and technique of Konstantin Rassadin's performance as *Punchinello,* choreographed by Leonid Jakobson to music by Rachmaninoff, and in the show-stopping *The Flames of Paris pas de deux,* choreographed by Vasily Vainonen, to music by Boris Asafiev, for Ninel Kurgapkina and Alexander Pavlovsky. And Inna Zubkovskaya and Yuri Korneyev danced Chabukiani's *Etude,* to Schumann's score, with such honest sincerity and purity of line that I could quite overlook its otherwise old-fashioned approach. A slight *pas de deux, The Lovers,* choreographed by Leonid Jakobson for Anatoli Gridin, and repeats of *The Gossips* and *Taras Bulba,* comprised the balance of the programme.

The Metropolitan Opera House was sold our for the Leningrad Kirov's three-week season so Sol Hurok quite wisely moved the company over to the mammoth Madison Square Garden, where prices ranged from $2 to $8 a seat, for an additional ten-day engagement that alternated between performances of a scenery-less *Swan Lake* and Highlight Programmes I and II.

Obviously, the appearances of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet in America will make all of us look at ballet in a new light. Since the greater share of what we have come to know as Russian ballet in the Western world stems directly from the Maryinsky tradition, it has been a revelation to finally see the source and fountainhead, as it were.



TRANSATLANTIC CHOREOGRAPHERS : Antony Tudor, Martha Graham, Norman Morrice and Hugh Laing at a party given by Arthur Todd to welcome Morrice, Rambert's choreographer, to New York. Many famous names in the dance were also there to meet Morrice who is on a three-month tour of observation. Photo : Dance News.

NEWS IN BRIEF

AT the personal request of Konstantin Sergeyev, Artistic Director of the Leningrad Kirov Ballet, Martha Graham presented her professional company in an "exercise de style" for our visitors at her studio on October 5.

WHEN American Ballet Theatre opened their two-week New York season on October 2 at the 54th Street Theatre, they had as their guests the Leningrad Kirov Ballet Company, who, after the performance, adjourned backstage to a company party to renew acquaintances made when this American company visited Leningrad last year.

A complete report on American Ballet Theatre's season, as well as Jerome Robbins' "Ballets : U.S.A.", will appear in our December issue.

NORMAN MORRICE, principal choreographer and a leading soloist with Ballet Rambert, is now in America on a three to four month period of observation and study of dance and choreography in our native field. Morrice's stay in New York is on a grant from the Institute of International Education's international cultural exchange programme. This young artists' project has, in turn, been made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation and is administered by the Arts Division of the I.I.E. Morrice is the fourth such choreographer to visit the U.S. this year. Previous grants were given to Fredbjorn Bjornsson, a principal dancer-choreographer of the Royal Danish Ballet; Antonio Truyol, Maitre de Ballet of the Teatro Colon, Argentina; Hernan Baldrich, who is associated with dance activities at the Catholic University in Santiago, Chile. An alternate candidate, Werner Ulbrich, chief choreographer of the Dusseldorf Opera, Germany, was also here earlier this year.

Arthur Todd.

JABEZ AND THE DEVIL — Decor

Continued from page 17

else. Then there is an interlude for the Devil's Followers, all "Folies Bergére number ten touring company pre-First World War". Now I can see that such creatures might represent to the simple Jabez a vision of a paradise he could never hope to attain, not anyway without the Devil's help, but even so, I think they could have been designed in less of a sleazy muddle. Anyway, from the point of view of theatre, they could have been designed so that they showed-up Mary, Jabez's wife (transformed for the occasion into a Middle Western Mistinguette). She, poor dear, never emerged from the welter of aigrettes, tulle, sateen, bobble fringe and general silliness — she had no chance at all.

The most effective moments, pictorially, were when John Sullivan's lighting was at its dimmest and nothing could be seen other than some angular shapes projected on the cyclorama. **Peter Williams.**

TRIPLE BILL — Decor

Continued from page 21

mood of the times in which they were received that made them what they were — then. *Anna-Anna* or *The Seven Deadly Sins* was typical of the kind of experimentation going on in European theatres. That it survives today at all is entirely due to Kurt Weill's brilliant and bitingly bitter score which, now it is more isolated from the mood that incubated it, seems better today than it did at the time. MacMillan's discovery of the young and remarkable Australian designer, Ian Spurling, was particularly happy, for this boy is almost "kinky" about the particular era from which *Anna-Anna* emanated.

Spurling has attempted no "reconstruction" nor has he sought inspiration from UFA films which, and let's be honest here, laid a vast leaden hand over the cinema of pre-war years. He is a boy of the 'sixties with a romanticised view of the 'thirties, he has absorbed many peculiarities of the period and spewed it out into the chaos of today. Colour is piled on the stage with the abandon of a cigarbox lid and every rule of the "good taste" design school is gloriously smashed to fragments.

The seven sins, and the seven localities, jerk into each other like a dotty kaleidoscope with dancers manipulating the fragments. All the time there appears to be scenic movement — huge lettered cubes are shunted and piled throughout the work — and all the time there is something arresting, stimulating and exciting for the eye to feed on. Strangely enough, and this is where either Spurling has been brilliant or possibly it's MacMillan's production, none of it detracts from the action — it all becomes a part of the work as a whole. The only fault I could find in the scenery was in the position of the house which the Annas' family are building in Louisiana. It is, or rather the building of it is, the motivation for all the sins of the Petit Bourgeois. Placed as it was, right on the prompt side of the stage, it is possible that a large section of the audience missed it all together.

Anya Linden, the dancing Anna, looked as ravishing as one of the Dolly Sisters in the youthful flush of their early years. She has a different costume for each of the seven sins and all of them have a real chic that I have seldom seen in British designing. But the costumes all through are right, unobtrusive, unaffected and marry perfectly with the frenetic atmosphere of the settings. Spurling is decidedly one of the most interesting finds and if ballet cannot find a place for him then the world of revues and musicals most decidedly should.

SALADE: That wayward heart of mine starts to sink these days when there is any mention of Pulcinella, and Milhaud's song and dance entertainment (dessert more than salade) is irretrievably concerned with this Neapolitan character. When it comes to the designing thereof, my memory reluctantly wanders back through endless corridors peopled by characters which designers have utterly failed to bring alive in their laborious evocations of Callot — tasteful and bloodless. But who wants taste when blood and other less mentionables are needed. What Picasso did for the ballet, *Pulcinella,* is the only exception to this weary and self-conscious parade.

Hats off, then, to Barry Kay, who has eschewed the cold glaze of Meissen figurines and sought inspiration, apparently, from that great Commedia dell'Artist of our time — Saul Steinberg. This wonderful American graphic comedian, with his stabbing fine line, realises most truly the spirit of Italian comedy whose main object was to puncture the inflated citadels of pomposity, bureaucracy and every other "osity", "ocracy" and "ism", or would have if there had been "isms" in those days.

Kay, in his costumes, tilts most elegantly at everything. His heroines, Rosetta and Isabella, become midinettes who appear to have borrowed models from their respective fashion houses for the evening — their line is extravagant and bizarre yet immensely chic. La Contessa is a caricature of a Frederick Lonsdale matron. Cinzio is a gigolo from a "Tango Tea". The most Steinbergian characters, though, are the troop of Capitano Cartuccia who appear as a posse of those Amazon drum majors leading processions in American celebration parades. Those and when Pulcinella and Corviello, accompanied by a delicious llama, appear disguised as Peruvians. These and many other delightful costumes are shown against a rickety and wholly apt "café" construction.

The great thing about Kay's designing is that he has sketched the whole work in with the lightest of possible touches. It just froths and bubbles the whole time and was obviously dictated to him by the slight and transitory nature of Milhaud's score. If charades are to be presented in the theatre, then this was obviously the way to go about it as far as the design is concerned. **Peter Williams.**

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET
at Covent Garden

October
25 *Antigone, Symphonic Variations, The Firebird.*
26 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
27 *Petrushka, Diversions, Daphnis and Chloë.*
30 *Petrushka, Diversions, Daphnis and Chloë.*
November
2 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair.
4 **(M)** *Antigone, Symphonic Variations, The Firebird.*
4 **(E)** *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Linden, Gilpin).
8 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Blair).
9 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair).
11 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Seymour, Gilpin).
13 *Petrushka, Diversions, Daphnis and Chloë.*
16 *Antigone, Symphonic Variations, The Firebird.*
17 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
18 **(M)** *Giselle* (Page, Hynd).
21 *Ondine* (Fonteyn, Somes).
25 **(M)** *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Park, MacLeary).
25 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
27 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Blair).
December
1 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Blair).
2 *Ondine* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
7 *Les Sylphides, Petrushka, Les Patineurs.*
9 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Park, Rosson).
9 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Blair).
12 *Les Sylphides* (Seymour, Gilpin). *Persephone* (World première of Ashton/Stravinsky work). *Jabez and the Devil.*
13 *Les Sylphides, Persephone, Jabez and the Devil.*
15 *Les Sylphides, Persephone, Jabez and the Devil.*
16 **(M)** *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
20 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair).
18 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Blair).
21 *Les Sylphides, Persephone, Diversions.*
27 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Sibley, Rosson).
28 *Les Sylphides, Persephone, Diversions.*
30 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Park, Rosson).
30 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Linden, MacLeary).
January
1 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Page, Hynd).
3 *Les Sylphides, Persephone, Diversions.*
5 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair).
6 **(M)** *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Park, MacLeary).
9 *Cinderella* (Beriosova, MacLeary).
13 **(M)** *Cinderella* (Linden, MacLeary).
13 **(E)** *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Blair).
15 *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Blair).
17 *Cinderella* (Nerina, Ashbridge).
20 **(M)** *Cinderella* (Fonteyn, Blair).
20 **(E)** *Cinderella* (Nerina, Ashbridge).
25 *La Fille Mal Gardée* (Nerina, Blair).
27 **(M)** *Cinderella* (Seymour, Doyle).
27 **(E)** *Le Baiser de la Fée, Scènes de Ballet, The Firebird.*

These programmes are subject to Alteration. Check with daily press.

THE ROYAL BALLET
on tour

October
16 The New Theatre, Oxford (2 weeks)
30 The Opera House, Manchester.
November
6 The Kings Theatre, Glasgow.
13 The Kings Theatre, Edinburgh.
20 Theatre Royal, Newcastle.
27 The Royal Court, Liverpool.
December
4 The Lyceum, Sheffield.
Christmas season at Le Théâtre du Casino, Monte Carlo.

BALLET RAMBERT

October
16 The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton.
30 Theatre Royal, Exeter.
November
6 The Arts Theatre, Cambridge.
13 Theatre Royal, Bath.
20 The New Theatre, Cardiff.
27 Theatre Royal, Nottingham.
December
4 The Streatham Hill Theatre, Streatham Hill.
11 The Hippodrome, Golders Green.

LONDON'S FESTIVAL BALLET

October
23 Theatre Royal, Norwich.
30 The Gaumont Theatre, Southampton.
November
6 The Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham.
13 The Hippodrome, Brighton.
20 The Odeon Theatre, Leeds.
27 The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton.
December
4 The Empire Theatre, Sunderland.
26 (3 weeks) The Royal Festival Hall, London (Full production of *The Nutcracker*).

WESTERN THEATRE BALLET

October
16 Tour of Lincolnshire Music Centres.
30 (4 weeks). Tour of the West Country.

HARLEQUIN BALLET

October
27 The Town Hall, Battersea.
Dec. to Feb. The New Theatre, Cardiff (pantomime season).

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October
23 The Streatham Hill Theatre, Streatham Hill.

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at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on November 2.

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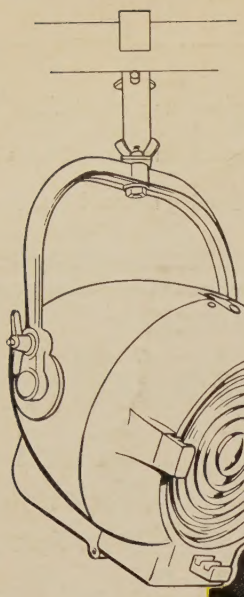

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The Festival Ballet. Photo by courtesy of Associated Newspapers.

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